

Devon C. Lee. The Public Parallel: Understanding sociocultural influences in the rise and fall of the Baroda Public Library system. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. January, 2010. 85 Pages. Advisor: Katherine M. Wisser.

The current challenges faced in the field of librarianship within India may stem from the dearth of scholarship relating to sociocultural and socioeconomic factors in the historical development of libraries. This paper seeks to examine social aspects of information authority and transmission within India's history as a way of contextualizing the environment in which the first public library movement in India took shape. Attention then turns to an in depth examination of the Baroda public library movement; its impetus, growth, challenges, and eventual decline are analyzed in light of existing social systems and changes. The results suggest that sociocultural factors may have played a greater part in the movement's failure than previously considered. Such findings have critical implications in the future development of libraries within India and further studies of this nature may assist library professionals in reducing the social marginalization of libraries in India by aligning library missions and services with social aims and norms.

Headings:

Public libraries—India—Baroda (Princely State)—History

Libraries—India—History

Public libraries—India

India—History

Public libraries—Social aspects—India—History

Libraries and community

THE PUBLIC PARALLEL: UNDERSTANDING SOCIOCULTURAL INFLUENCES
IN THE RISE AND FALL OF THE BARODA PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM.

by
Devon C. Lee

A Master's paper submitted to the faculty
of the School of Information and Library Science
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in
Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

January 2010

Approved by

Katherine M. Wisser

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Ancient and Medieval India: Primacy of Oral Traditions.....	8
Muslim Patronage: The Rise of Writing.....	19
Out of the West: The Library's New Meaning.....	24
Library History of Gujarat.....	31
The Maharaja Sayajirao: Ruler and Reformer.....	33
For the People: The Public Library Movement.....	41
Understanding Decline.....	58
Conclusion.....	67
Works Cited.....	70
Figures.....	74
Glossary of terms.....	78

Introduction

In contrast to contemporary ideology, in which the public library was identified as an influence-exerting social institution, Jesse Shera in his landmark, *Foundations of the public library*, asserts that the library is an agency over which true social institutions exert control. This distinction defines the parallel relationship between libraries and society; a relationship whose course is driven by social norms. Social institutions, such as the family or the state, are primary and basic; they determine the social pattern. Social agencies, like schools, museums, and libraries, on the other hand, are secondary and derived; their position in society being determined by the underlying principles of the dominant institutions. Shera explains:

The agency is the instrument of the institution, and by means of it the institution exercises much of its social control. Thus the distinction is more than a matter of degree; it involves a flow of power and authority. In one way or another man determines the social goals that he will seek and shapes the agencies of his group life to achieve those ends. (Shera, 1949, p. v)

Ultimately, it is this ideology that makes Shera's work so ground breaking, because he does not focus so much on reconstructing a chronological time line of library growth, but rather on locating its development within a socioeconomic and sociocultural context. In doing so, Shera establishes a new paradigm for understanding the multifarious nature of library evolution.

It is imperative that the library be given a social history, for according to Shera (1949), "the objectives of the public library [in particular] are directly dependent upon the objectives of the society itself" (p. 248). Understanding the forces active within a society

can provide insight into the types of agencies created to attain communal aims. Shera analyzes amongst other things the educational, religious, economic, and demographic aspects of the development of the public library movement in America.

One of the most important elements in the development of the public library was the push towards universal education. Shera (1949) asserts: “Public library development was of necessity forced to wait upon educational reform for the simple reason that an adequate library patronage presupposes an educated, or at least literate, public” (p. 222). Educational progress was in turn dependent upon the stabilization of economic conditions in the new world and the growth of the middle class. To this point, education had been a privilege available only to the wealthy, but with general prosperity the middle classes were able to establish their own academies, thus providing the advantage of learning to a greater segment of the population (Shera, 1949). Also important in understanding the advancement of popular education are the contributions of religious institutions. As part of their charitable activities churches helped to establish schools and educate the poor.

These developments in conjunction with the emerging philosophies of American transcendentalism would eventually lead to the desire within the society as a whole to enact legislation for the funding of a public school system. There began an overwhelming social “urge for improvement and enlightenment of the masses” (Shera, 1949, p.88). Shera (1949) maintains that these characteristics were indicative of institutional aims; the public mind had been conditioned to the idea of tax support for schools, therefore making a government supported system of education successful. However, the homogeneous nature of the American population at this time must also be

kept in mind. The success of the educational movement may very well have been greatly dependent upon the fact that dramatically varying social currents did not exist.

It is only when these conditions were met that the public library could emerge. For the purpose of his work, Shera (1949) defines the public library as “established by state laws...supported by local taxation or voluntary gifts...managed as a public trust, and every citizen of the city or town which maintains it has an equal share in its privileges of reference and circulation” (p. 157). Some critics argue that this definition is too rigid and detracts from the rich history of social involvement with libraries throughout America’s colonial and antebellum periods. They loosely define the public library as simply a collection of books under the custodianship of public authorities. Carleton Joeckel, a twentieth-century proponent of public library services, goes a step further and states that the functional purpose of the library, rather than its fundamental existence, is of import when defining the institution. In *The government of the American public library*, Joeckel states, “any library which has been officially charged with the responsibility, or has voluntarily assumed the responsibility, for providing free library service of a general nature to a particular community, or more or less definite portion of it, [is] considered to be a public library” (Shera, 1949, p.156).

Yet, it is important to note that the definition provided by Shera affirms the extent to which the library, as an institutional form, has been adopted by the public at large. Where as the first two definitions could apply to small, specific populations such as religious or corporate bodies, the definition presented by Shera makes explicit the right of the general public, regardless of class or education level, to access the collection and avail of its services. Furthermore, this debate over the definition of the public library is a question of semantics most often utilized by individuals vying to make the claim for

which ‘public library’ was established first. Shera (1949) admonishes that the ‘antiquarian controversy’ detracts rather than adds to our understanding of “how [the public library] attained its present stage of development” (p. 157). He charges that both of the above definitions elide the complexity of the public library as an institutional form, particularly as it exists today. He maintains that “any attempt to define with precision the term ‘public library’ results in confusion because the institution itself is a blending of interests, objectives, and forms” (Shera, 1949, p. 157) which have become manifest at different times in different ways. He continues that “the meaning of ‘public library’ varied as the institution evolved under the impact of social and economic changes and acquired quite different implications and connotations over successive periods of time” (Shera, 1949, p. 157).

In the West, Shera’s call for sociocultural and socioeconomic analyses of the library have been answered. These scholarly and practical examinations have greatly contributed to the field of librarianship and led to the advancement of user studies and user-oriented services. In many ways, Shera’s theories on public libraries shifted focus from library form to more human-centered activities. On the other hand, in India, where libraries suffer from disuse and social marginalization, there is a conspicuous lack of literature pertaining to their socioeconomic and sociocultural histories. In fact there is a dearth of information on library history in general; those that do exist focus primarily on chronological timelines and quantitative studies pertaining to collection size, membership, or amount of funding.

In 1989 Donald Davis performed the first exhaustive review of writings pertaining to the historiography of libraries in India. His findings indicate that:

...printed, secondary treatments of Indian library history reveals about thirty books and several dissertations, about thirty articles and chapters in collected works, and at least two whole collections of papers that have direct historical significance...Most of the works deal with general aspects of library history that treat extensive periods of history. (Taher, 2001, p. 81)

Davis explains that this literary omission stems from the fact that from its modern inception, the library profession in India was driven by the necessity to establish itself in the scientific era. Davis states: “A developing and industrializing nation, it seemed, should not devote precious professional resources to the study of the past...The influence of books and libraries on the cultural development of society is a topic, it would seem, that is best left to senior and retired members of the profession and other scholars” (Taher, 2001, p. 79).

The profession is not unaware of this deficiency and many Indian library proponents have called for the writing, or rewriting, of library history in the past fifty years. Yet scholarly advancement of this subject remains negligible. S.R Ranganathan, who was, and still remains, India’s foremost librarian laments that “the library profession is too small in India to spare a person to fill up this antiquarian gap. Those trained in the scientific method of tracing history are too preoccupied with dynastic and political history to spare sufficient time for cultural history in general and library history in particular” (Taher, 2001, p. 78). Ranganathan’s observations are supported by the findings of Davis’ study, which Taher (2001) has summarized: “All contributions [to the writing of Indian library history] were by library science scholars and librarians. There was not one single write-up from the scholars belonging to different fields and different areas of scholarly activity, such as, general or specialist historians, sociologists, etc.” (p. 82)

Library professionals can no longer ignore this call, or wait for scholars in the field of history to write what is essentially the soul of their profession's existence. The purpose of this work is to reanalyze the first public library movement in India in light of the sociocultural and socioeconomic elements stressed by Shera. The first part of this paper seeks to provide a general history of libraries of India, as well as those of Gujarat in particular in order to demonstrate the historical role of information within society, social ideas about information authority, and the development of the written work in information transfer; such an examination will contextualize the environment in which the first public library movement took place. Focus will then shift to a more in depth history of Baroda, and its ruler, Sayajirao Gaekwad^{1, 2} under whose auspices the movement began. Some observations of M. L. Nagar, who is the foremost scholar on this subject will be analyzed. But given Shera's (1949) warning that: "It is not wise to press too far a strictly economic interpretation of the library movement, particularly if such a point of view excludes the social and cultural factors which so profoundly influenced library growth" (p. 81), focus will turn away from Nagar's emphasis on financial and legislative causes of the movement's decline and instead tend to more social interpretations of the public library's limited success. A social-centered examination of the public library movement in Baroda will show that the seeds of its collapse were sowed from its inception.

¹ The spelling of the Maharaja's last name is often represented in various ways, and is commonly seen as Gaiwkad and Gaewkar. This alternate spelling is based on the retroflex "d" sound within Hindi which is often heard as an "r". For this paper, the "Gaewkad" spelling has been retained.

Ancient and Medieval India: Primacy of Oral Traditions

A. L. Basham, one of the foremost scholars on ancient India describes Indian civilization as having one of the oldest continuous cultural traditions in the world. He claims that prior to the rise of archeology, most provincials in Egypt, Iraq, or Greece would have had nothing but the vaguest conceptions of the glory of their forefathers. In contrast to Egyptian, Grecian, and Sumerian civilizations, whose institutions of government, religion, and knowledge faded from the cultural fabric, Indian society can, and does, claim a “consciousness of its own antiquity” (Basham, 1967, p. 4). Although no reason is explicitly given for this phenomenon, India’s enduring oral tradition is often alluded to by scholars and laymen alike.

The beginnings of India’s earliest civilization date to approximately 5000 B.C.E. Named after the Indus Valley located near the boarder of modern day Pakistan and India (fig. 1), the civilization had two main settlements at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. The height of the Indus Valley civilization, or Harappa Culture as it has been more recently named, occurred between 2300 and 1600 B.C.E. Evidence of what was believed to be a developed script emerged around 3000 B.C.E. Basham (1967) claims this script consisted of 270 characters, was ideographic or syllabic in nature, and was most likely influenced by the Sumerian script which was fully developed by 3300 B.C.E. It is interesting to note that what scholars identify as the height of this civilization does not coincide with the period in which the script emerged. The little that can be gained from the inscriptions of the Indus Valley seals has led to scholarly controversy for over 130 years. Over one hundred attempts have been made to decipher the language, and since the people of the Indus Valley, unlike their Egypt and Mesopotamian counterparts, did

not leave behind extensive writings or epigraphs, “lost manuscript” theories have been advanced to explain the lack of body of works that would suggest true literacy.

Farmer, Sproat, and Witzel (2004) in a recent ground breaking article contend that the extreme brevity of the inscriptions, taken in conjunction with other archeological evidence, suggests that the Harappa Culture was in fact illiterate. They argue that vested political and academic interests continue to uphold antiquated archeological theory regarding the ‘script’ of the Indus Valley civilization. Flourishing urban centers that have no formal system of writing have been identified in Iran, Central Asia, and South America thus refuting the claim that literacy is inherent to all developed civilizations. However there is still a proclivity to herald the presence of the written word as a mark of advanced culture, thus scholars of South Asia adhere to the ‘script’ theory to ensure that the Indus Valley is accorded historical importance equal to Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Farmer et al. (2004) urge scholars to set aside this colonial dogma. They aver that the evidence that the Indus inscriptions did not encode speech actually increases the symbols’ historical value. Little is known about those societies that rejected writing for other types of sign systems, and understanding the Indus inscriptions could give insight into an often unacknowledged class of civilizations; those which colonialists often refer to as ‘prehistoric.’ In opposition to prevailing belief, Farmer et al. (2004) advance the theory that the Indus Valley ‘script’ is rather a system of symbols derived from what was possibly a stringent religious-political arrangement of society. It is believed that much like modern day India, the Indus Valley was multilingual. Universally recognizable symbols were adopted over any particular language-based script in order to maintain social cohesion. Farmer et al. (2004) intimate that the adoption of symbols based on a

deep-rooted belief system may explain how the Indus Valley civilization was able to control a territory broader than that of any of its literate contemporaries.

The assumption that this is system of religious-political symbols is further supported by the sudden disappearance of the entire system in the second millennium B.C.E., which is not typical of a fully enabled script. Indus society as a whole had remained insulated up until 1550 B.C.E., and scholars have often puzzled over the relative imbalance of artifacts in the valley; Indus seals have been found in the Gulf region and as far as Iraq, but no single Mesopotamian inscription has turned up in any Indus site. Such an absence may indicate the extent to which the ruling class controlled the flow of goods, and thus ideas, into the Indus Valley. Farmer et al. (2004) even go so far as to suggest that there may have been a blockade against writing, both foreign and domestic, since it would challenge the power of the system of symbols. At the time of the 'scripts' disappearance, external influences were more strongly felt in the Indus Valley than ever before. The sudden increase of foreign artifacts about this time suggests that a major shift in the pan-Indus ideology occurred, which led to decreased control over imports and immigration.

Following the decline of the Harappa Culture, nomadic tribes from Iran began to move into North India during the Vedic period (1500-500 B.C.E.). The *Aryas*, or *Aryans* as they are more commonly known, occupied a vast territory within India for over one thousand years, yet they never developed a urban civilization. They followed a mixed pastoral and agricultural economy, and organized themselves into tribes. The tribal structure was divided along class lines, which assumed a greater rigidity during the late Vedic period. Division occurred along four *varnas*, or classes or castes, known as

Brahman (priest), *Ksatriya* (warrior), *Vaisya* (peasant), and *Sudra* (serf). Each tribe was ruled by a *raja*, or chief, but the most important figure within this society was the priest.

Aryan priests were responsible for performing the sacrifices which ensured the continued prosperity of the tribe. More importantly for the study of history, these priests had developed a complex poetic technique for the memorization of lengthy hymns. Over the course of several hundred years (most likely between 1500-1000 B.C.E.) holy men composed hymns dedicated to the various deities of their religion, which were orally compiled and arranged at the end of the first millennium. Just over one thousand of these mantras form a collection known as the *Rg Veda*, one of four sacred texts, or *Vedas*, in what would later become the Hindu religion. Basham (1967) observes that, “the complete absence of any words connected with writing in the *Rg Veda*, despite its size and the many contexts in which such words might be expected to occur, is almost certain proof that the *Aryans* were illiterate” (p.33).

However, this ‘illiteracy’ did not keep the *Aryans* from composing some of the most enduring works of religious and secular literature. In the late Vedic period (900-500 B.C.E.), the composition of the *Brahmanas* and *Upanishads* would complete what is known as the Vedic literature which began with the *Rg Veda*³. In addition to these religious works, which were meant for a select audience of priests, the epic poems of the *Mahabharata*⁴ and the *Ramayana*⁵ were also composed during this period. The literature

³ *Brahmanas*, which are essentially commentaries on the correct performance of rituals described in the *Vedas*, are the oldest examples of prose in the Indo-European language. They originated between 800 and 600 B.C.E. The earliest *Upanishads* overlap the latest *Brahmanas* and are also composed in prose in the form of questions and answers, but later *Upanishads* would revert back to verse compositions. *Upanishad* literally means “a session,” or the “sitting at the feet of a master who imparts esoteric doctrines” (Basham, 1967, p. 250). The *Upanishads* were explanations of the religious canon.

⁴ The *Mahabharata* is the longest epic poem in the world with over 1.8 million words composed in over one hundred thousand verses and long prose passages. It contains the story of the Bharata dynasty, but more importantly it discusses the Hindu concepts of *dharma* (duty), *karma* (action/deed), *artha* (purpose), *kama* (desire), and *moksha* (liberation) and the relationship between the individual and society.

of the Vedic period is an enduring element within modern Hindu culture. Even today orthodox Brahmans repeat hymns in their daily worship that were part of the *Rg Veda*. Other Vedic hymns are recited at weddings and funerals. Basham (1967) maintains that even the humblest Indian is familiar with legends naming rulers from a thousand years before the Common Era. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are not only still performed in theatres, but their mini-serial productions are some of the most viewed programs on television. Despite the fact that these works have been compiled in written format, their transmission through oral lessons is preferred even today. Understanding the social status given to the oral tradition should be considered in any Indian library history.

In the sixth century B.C.E. two prominent spiritual figures emerged whose teachings would influence the social and political structures within India. The first personality is Mahavira who at 30 (ca?. 510 B.C.E.) renounced his family to become an ascetic. He is responsible for giving formal shape to Jain teachings, which had been in existence as early as the seventh century B. C. E. Like that of the Vedic religion, Jain teachings were not written but were passed along through oral tradition. Although the strict class barriers that existed in the *Vedas* were not present in the teachings of Mahavira, there were still some restrictions which precluded involvement by certain professions. The emphasis on non-violence within the Jain canon prevented many agriculturalists from joining the sect, since cultivation inherently involved the killing of insects and other living beings. There was also a strict limitation against private property, which was interpreted to mean landed property, which kept many of the ruling class from

⁵ The *Ramayana* is a poem of 50,000 lines telling the story of the Hindu deity, Rama. It also contains didactic commentary on the ideal characteristics of members of society (i.e. king, servant, wife, and son).

adopting the religion. Jainism thus found its greatest following amongst the trading classes. Due to the nature of their work, Jain traders often traveled vast expanses of land and worked as middlemen to promote trade relations between both foreign and domestic contingencies. For this reason Jainism has been associated with the spread of urban culture. Initially Jain beliefs were followed only in the Gangetic plain areas, but in later centuries were adhered to in western India, particularly Gujarat, parts of Northern India, and the southern region of Mysore.

Siddhartha Gautama, a contemporary of Mahavira, founded one of the most prevalent religions of South Asia. Like Mahavira, Siddhartha left his family in order to follow a life of asceticism. After several years he realized that the path to salvation could not be found through ascetic means, and resolved to ponder the question in meditation. For 49 days he meditated until on the last day he received enlightenment, at which time he became known as the Buddha (“awakened one”). He gave his first sermon, known as the *Turning of the Wheel of Law*⁶, at Deer Park in Sarnath, near modern day Benares, shortly after his enlightenment.

Buddhism, like Jainism, was atheistic, and the achievement of *nirvana* (extinction, or the escape from the cycle of *karma*) was not dependent on divine intervention. Unlike the Vedic religion, which used *karma* to explain the cycle of rebirth and justify caste status, Buddhism rejected the caste system entirely and stated that even the poorest individual could attain *nirvana* by following the *Middle Way*. In fact, the Buddha emphasized the role of the individual in his own salvation. His teachings were

⁶ This sermon contained the basic tenants of Buddhist belief. At the nucleus of the sermon are the *Four Noble Truths*: the world is full of suffering, suffering is caused by human desires, the renunciation of desire is the path to salvation, and this salvation is possible through the *Eight-Fold Path*. The *Eight-Fold Path* is composed of eight principles of right action that will lead to a balanced life: right views, resolves, speech, conduct, livelihood, effort, recollection, and meditation. The combination of these eight elements within life is known as the *Middle Way*.

not founded on any complex metaphysical thinking, rather a simple understanding of causality. Another interesting break from other contemporary religions is seen in the language which the Buddha used to spread his message. The Buddha preferred the popular language Magadhi, over that of Sanskrit, and thus was able to reach even the lowest strata of society.

Although followers of the Buddha often wandered far distances to preach and seek alms, the religion was essentially congregational in nature, and monastic orders began to spring up near towns. These monasteries were revolutionary in nature not just in that they accepted individuals from all classes, but that they welcomed women. There were no expenses involved in worship, as contrasted with that of the *Brahmanical* services, which further opened Buddhism to the lower strata of society. The monasteries were democratically arranged and are said to have radically accelerated the spread of education amongst the general population of followers. Like other religious works of this period, the Buddhist canons were not preserved in written form. Buddhist teachings were still mainly dependent upon oral transmission by monks, both within the monastery and far afield. Yet access to these teachings was not as highly guarded as in the *Vedic* religion, as can be seen in the openness of monastic life.

The social changes brought about by Jainism and Buddhism paved the way for significant advancements during the Maurya period. By 272 B.C.E. almost the entire Indian subcontinent was under Mauryan control. The centralized government was efficient, taxes were levied, and municipal activities were undertaken to support agriculture such as the building of dams and systems of irrigation. The stability provided by the agrarian economy led to the organization of trade and the first small-scale industries are in evidence. Communication with the outside world was considerable,

particularly with Greece. People began to settle and a system of writing emerged. These changes would provide fertile soil for the tentative growth of libraries.

The most well-known ruler of this age, and the individual to whom the beginnings of library development can be circuitously attributed, is Asoka⁷. Asoka is most well-known for his rock inscriptions⁸, which Basham (1967) states are the oldest surviving Indian written documents of any historical significance. The inscriptions, found throughout India, are of two types. The first and smaller group of inscriptions is Asoka's declarations of his personal faith. The second set of inscriptions is known as the Major and Minor Rock Edicts, which were erected in areas where people were known to gather. These proclamations described the concept of *Dhamma*, which Asoka defined as an attitude of social responsibility: "It was a plea for the recognition of the dignity of man, and for a humanistic spirit in the activities of society" (Thapar, 1966, p. 86).

What occurred that caused this momentous shift towards writing? Was it the stability provided by a centralized, efficient government, or was it the influence of the rising trade and mercantile activities, which required the use of writing for tracking transactions? Was it a shift in religious practice, which emphasized the education of the masses and democratic access to information? Most likely, it was a complex

⁷ Asoka was known for his political reforms described by Basham (1967) as focusing on humanity in internal administration and the abandonment of aggressive war. "It seems that Asoka believed that, by setting an example of enlightened government, he might convince his neighbours [sic] of the merits of his new policy and thus gain the moral leadership of the whole civilized world. He by no means gave up his imperial ambitions, but modified them in accordance with the humanitarian ethics of Buddhism" (Basham, 1967, p. 54).

⁸ These inscriptions were written in two scripts, but the most commonly used was what is now known as *Brahmi*. Basham asserts that this script is almost perfectly adapted to the sounds of Indian language, which suggests that it probably had been developed over a long period of time.

Whatever its ultimate origin Brahmi is so skillfully adapted to the sounds of Indian languages that its development must have been at least in part deliberate. In the form we have it, it is the work not of merchants but of Brahmans or other learned men who knew something of the Vedic science of phonetics. It may have begun as a mercantile alphabet, suggested by the shapes of Semitic letters...but by the time of Asoka, though still not completely perfect, it was the most scientific script of the world. (Basham, 1967, p. 396)

combination of elements made possible by the presence of all the circumstances above.

Whatever the case may be, this represents a turning point in Indian history, as it began to shift from a dominantly oral tradition, to one in which writing flourished.

Following the death of Asoka, the Mauryan Empire went into decline. Yet this did not seem to affect the growth of trade or quell the blooming intellectual inquiry of the time. In fact, between the years 200 B.C.E and 300 C.E., a system of education began to take shape. Although amongst Hindus formalized education was still concentrated within the *Brahman* class, certain members of the *Ksatriya* classes and even some *Vaisyas* were able to study at educational centers. Courses focused mostly on Vedic texts and emphasized grammar. The Buddhist monasteries were less orthodox in terms of enrollment and teaching. Subjects such as grammar and medicine were taught in addition to the lessons of the Buddha.

By this time, the artisan guilds had become powerful enough that there emerged a separate branch of schools for professional education. Although technical education focused on instilling the skills necessary for a specific trade, mathematics and sciences were introduced into the 'curriculum.' One example is the introduction of geometry in the field of carpentry, which was applied to the construction of altars and sacrificial structures. Its success in these projects led to its slow application to more complex architecture. The introduction of astronomy led to advances in deep-sea navigation, which in turn took Indian traders farther afield than ever before.

Writing also flourished during this time. Although its greatest application was in the production of law books and grammars, the written word was also being adopted within the literary arts for recording works of poetry and drama, two of the most popular genres of the period. At the end of the first century B.C.E., the first Buddhist text was

committed to writing. The *Pali Canon* is a collection of scriptures in the *Theravada* tradition of Buddhism. The work, which took over three years to write, was begun on the recommendations of the monks at the Fourth Buddhist Council in Sri Lanka. The council had been called in reaction to a famine that occurred in the previous year, in which many monks died of starvation. The heads of the Council realized that knowledge of the Buddhist teachings, which to this point had been committed only to memory, could be lost should another such event take place. Thus the tradition of writing within the Buddhist religion was established, marking the beginning of what would become one of the earliest and richest traditions of libraries in the history of India.

By the beginning of the fifth century C.E. the Buddhists had established several centers of learning that possessed large libraries for the intellectual and spiritual cultivation of Buddhist monks. Some of the most well-known monastic institutions were established at Nalanda, Odantapuri, and Vikramasila in the modern state of Bihar; Vallabhi in modern Gujarat; and Taxila in the modern Punjab province of Pakistan (fig. 2). These centers served both Indian and foreign students of Buddhism, and the writings of Chinese Buddhist pilgrims provide some of the earliest and most detailed descriptions of these libraries.

The earliest accounts are those of Fa-Hsien, who came to India in 399 C.E. and traveled in search of Buddhist knowledge until 414 C.E. During his tour, he stayed at two large *Mahayana* monasteries learning to read and speak Sanskrit and Pali, and copying many of the religious texts contained within their libraries. What is important to note is not only the fact that Fa-Hsien, even as a foreign pilgrim, was able to access these works, but that he was allowed to copy them. This suggests an open attitude towards information access. Yet it would be a mistake to assume that the manuscript document

had replaced oral lessons as a medium for the transmission of knowledge. It must be kept in mind that the written tradition in China had long been established, and in order to understand the status of the written word within Indian society further examination of native descriptive accounts needs to be undertaken by modern scholars.

Over two-hundred years later, Hiuen-Tsang made a similar pilgrimage to India from 629 to 645 C.E. He states that the purpose of his visit was to “see [India’s] far famed shrines and all visible evidences of Lord Buddha’s ministrations...to procure [the] books in original language and to learn the true meaning of their obstruse [sic] doctrines from orthodox Pundits in India” (Datta, 1970, p. 18) His travelogue describes in great detail the geography of India and the monastic learning centers that he visited. His description of the Jetavana monastery reveals the diverse nature of the library collections: “The libraries were richly furnished, not only with orthodox literature but also with Vedic and other non-Buddhistic works, and with treatises on the arts and sciences taught in India at the time” (Datta, 1970, p. 21). It is through Hiuen-Tsang’s travelogues that library scholars are able to gain an insight into the wide variety of course subjects and interests taught within the monastic institutions and the extent to which their library collections supported such intellectual explorations.

Hiuen-Tsang conducted a great deal of his research in Nalanda, located in the modern state of Bihar. Nalanda was the most reputed center of learning at the time, and during his visit, there were over 5,000 students in residence. Tibetan accounts describe Nalanda as having a library known as the Dharamganja, which consisted of three buildings, one of which was supposedly nine stories in height.

In the second half of the seventh century, I-Tsing described his stay within the famed Nalanda monastery. In addition to his description of the official libraries, he

observed that many of the individual monks possessed private collections which could be used by members of the order. The development of individual collections could be the best indication of the growing prominence given to the manuscript document during this time period.

It appears however that the Buddhist emphasis on writing did not influence Jain followers. It was not until the beginning of the fifth century B. C. E. that there began a flurry of literary activity within Jainism. Datta (1970) refers to a great famine, which occurred in the mid-fifth century C.E. that decimated the population of the Jain monks who were the custodians of its sacred literature. Following this great loss, a council of monks was called around 453 C.E., to arrange for the writing and copying of sacred texts. It was during this time that the Jain scholars quit the tradition of transmitting knowledge orally and writing became a necessity. It is interesting to note that the Jain decision to adopt the written document as a medium of preservation parallels that within Buddhism; each shift occurred after major losses within the monastic population.

Muslim Patronage: The Rise of Writing

Although library development can be seen during India's medieval period, a true efflorescence occurs under Islamic rule. It is under Muslim patronage that writing was transformed into a fine art, and the collection of manuscripts became a popular practice amongst members of the upper classes. This should come as no surprise since writing has been a fundamental element of the Islamic tradition from its inception. The Islamic system of belief is based upon the revelations of the angel Jibril to Mohammed, the prophet of Islam, over a period of twenty-three years. It is believed that these divine communications were dictated by Mohammed to his contemporaries, who in turn

recorded these lessons of moral guidance in writing. Shortly after the death of Mohammed in 632 C.E., these writings were compiled and the Qur'an, which literally translates to "recitation," was formalized. The text of the Qur'an is considered to be the word of God, and as such, the Qur'an is venerated above all else in the Islamic faith.

The importance of the Qur'an and the Islamic emphasis on writing is exemplified by the production of the Qur'an under private patronage. Michael Harris (1995) states devout Muslims were encouraged to copy the Qur'an and make it available to others. Thus thousands of Qur'ans were produced, and the craft of the scribe became popular. Additionally, due to the importance of the Qur'an in religious practice, it became necessary to organize schools for the promotion of literacy. Harris (1995) further asserts that the establishment of educational institutions led to a stabilized Arabic language which would not only influence later religious writings but would shape secular literature as well. Wadad Kadi and Mustansir Mir further elaborate that:

Although Arabic, as a language and a literary tradition, was quite well developed by the time of Muhammad's prophetic activity, it was only after the emergence of Islam, with its founding scripture in Arabic, that the language reached its utmost capacity of expression, and the literature its highest point of complexity and sophistication. Indeed, it probably is no exaggeration to say that the Qur'an was one of the most conspicuous forces in the making of classical and post-classical Arabic literature... As far as diction is concerned, one could say that Qur'anic words, idioms, and expressions, especially "loaded" and formulaic phrases, appear in practically all genres of literature and in such abundance that it is simply impossible to compile a full record of them.
(Kadi & Mir, 2001, p.213, 217)

Literature was not the only art which was profoundly affected by the text of the Qur'an. Within the fine arts, the written word was popularized as a motif of artistic expression. Sections of the Qur'an were used as decorative elements on a broad range of objects; from daily-use items, such as platters and candleholders, to more grandiose architectural

structures, such as thresholds and domes. Of course the calligraphic arts of the book also enjoyed great development and patronage.

As the Persian speaking Afghans and Turks conquered and settled in what is now modern day Pakistan and Northern India, the native and Islamic traditions began to blend. In the army camps where the Persian speaking officers had to interact with allied Hindi speaking infantry, a new language emerged; a ‘camp language’ known as Urdu “evolved through a combination of Hindi syntax and Persian-Arabic vocabulary” (Thapar, 1966, p. 313). Another area where the assimilation of Islamic culture is evident is within the arts. Beginning in the Sultanate period (1206-1526 C.E.), the internal trade routes that had gone into decline following the Mauryan dynasty were once again reopened, and sea trade was renewed with vigor. The immigrating Muslims concentrated themselves in towns and cities, where they followed the artistic trades of their families. Romila Thapar (1966) concedes that the assimilation within the arts is due to the fact that the artisan classes, which lived in close proximity to one another in urban areas, had the most interaction; whereas the nobility and peasant classes of Hinduism and Islam tended to live more separate existences. It is interesting to note that like the earlier Buddhist and Jain traditions, the Islamic tradition also made the greatest impact within the artisan and trading classes.

The arts were highly patronized by the ruling classes, and it is this patronage which brought social changes to the forefront. The Turko-Afghan rulers, or *Sultans*, and minor Muslim rulers also supported institutions of learning and religion in areas under their control. They established *maktabs* (primary schools), *madrasas* (schools of higher learning), libraries, and *mosques* (Islamic place of worship). Capital cities such as Ghazni, Lahore, and Delhi, became the centers of learning, attracting scholars and artists

from as far away as Iran and Iraq: “In the course of time the capital of Delhi by the presence of these unrivalled men of great talents had become the envy of Bagdad, the rival of Cairo, and the equal of Constantinople” (Datta, 1970, p. 51).

Given the Islamic cultivation of the written word, it is no surprise that libraries were highly patronized. Sultan Jalal-uddin Khilji (ruled 1290-1296 C.E.) founded the Imperial Library of Delhi and appointed Amir Khusrao its librarian. Khusrao to this day is still recognized as one of the greatest scholars and poets of the era. Zahir-uddin Muhammad Babur (1483-1531) did much to expand the Imperial library, and is said to have introduced the art of book illustration, which developed considerably under the reign of his son, Humayun (1508-1556), and grandson, Akbar (1542-1605).

Humayun was a man of great learning. It is said that even in battle he employed the services of a librarian and carried his own library of selected works. He converted a pleasure-house in the Purana Qila of Delhi into a library. It is rumored that after becoming so fatigued from reading Humayun fell to his death in this very library (Allauddin and Rout, 1996).

Akbar succeeded Humayun, and even though he was illiterate he was a great supporter of learning. Ellen Smart (1981) has studied Akbar’s education from evidence within courtly records and personal journals of the time period. Under the tutelage of four of the regions best teachers, Akbar still failed to learn to read or write, and Smart has suggested that he was dyslexic. Yet Akbar had a sharp mind and did much to promote intellectual activities, both for his own good and that of his people. He was interested in the mechanical arts and the accounts of not only the court historian Abul Fazal, but numerous letters from Jesuit priest attest to this (Habib, 1992). He paid men to read to him from great works, and ordered the translation of many Sanskrit manuscripts into

Persian. He sponsored religious debates which were attended by scholars of the Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, and Roman Catholic Jesuit faith. It is known that Akbar even invited religious figures to attend to him privately and explain the intricacies of their faith's doctrines. Due in part to this theological openness, Akbar received many fine religious texts from Western missionaries and native spiritual leaders attempting to win his favors. It is claimed that Akbar's library was so extensive that European missionaries often came requesting permission to peruse its shelves and commission copies of vital religious works (Rizvi, 1987). Following his death in 1605 an inventory of the Imperial properties was taken at which time the Imperial Library contained over 24,000 volumes and was valued at over 6.4 million rupees.

It is important to note that throughout Muslim rule, other religions and institutes of learning still prospered. Some scholars claim that Buddhism suffered the greatest from the change of power which came about under the Muslims, but a thorough study of the history of Buddhism will show that Buddhism was on the decline prior to the arrival of the first Muslims. Buddhism depended on the support of nobles and wealthy traders and as the followers of Islam gained greater political power and the arts and mercantile classes began to be dominated by Muslims, Buddhism lost the funding that allowed it to flourish. Although Buddhism virtually ceased to exist in India by the twelfth century C.E. (proceeding the firm establishment of the Sultanate dynasty), Hindu scholarship was maintained and possibly even strengthened by the presence of Islam.

While the greatest intermingling of cultures occurred in what could be termed as the middle class, the wealthy and religious leaders of each faith remained aloof as a way of preserving their own personal interests. These separatist tendencies could not stop the flow of cultural integration. In fact the vast *madrasa* libraries and the collecting activities

of the Muslim elite may have influenced the growth of holdings within Hindu religious institutions and private collections.

Despite the democratization of access, it must be acknowledged that libraries and book collecting remained a privilege of wealth. Even with the mingling of cultures within the middle class and the promotion of the written word, the expense of the hand written book made collecting amongst the artisan and merchant classes rare. The agrarian classes, who remained for the most part illiterate, would be hard pressed to find value in a library, let alone an undecipherable manuscript. With the coming of the Europeans, the introduction of the printing press, and the activities of the missionaries the exclusion of the lower classes would inevitably change.

Out of the West: The Library's New Meaning

The rising tide of European settlers in the 17th and 18th centuries brought a new wave of library activity to the Indian subcontinent. Although the British were not the first Europeans to settle in India, they were the most influential in terms of the governmental and educational legacies that survive to this day. British rule in India began with the activities of the East India Company, a joint stock corporation formed to pursue trade in South Asia in the early years of the seventeenth century. During the first decade of its existence the Company was locked in bitter trade competition particularly with the well-established Portuguese. The escalating struggle culminated in the Battle of Swally off the coast of Gujarat in 1612, in which the British defeated the Portuguese breaking their century long commercial monopoly in India (Chakraborti, 1994). Immediately following the campaign the Company considered it imperative to establish settlements in order to maintain their newly acquired foothold. A negotiating body

approached the Muslim emperor, Jahangir (1569-1627), with a commercial treaty granting tracts of land to the Company for development in return for European goods (Chakraborti, 1994). The request was granted marking the beginnings of what would soon become one of England's greatest colonization endeavors.

The major areas of East India Company control were Surat in the state of Gujarat, Kolkata in Bengal, and Madras in Tamil Nadu⁹. As Mughal rule went into decline after the death of Aurangzeb (1618-1707), the East India Company began to aggressively amass power. In 1757, following the Battle of Plassey in which the British defeated the *Nawab* of Bengal, they assumed not only his dominions, but they received a *diwani* from the emperor granting rights to collect revenue. The Company, much like the *Sultans* in the Sultanate period, adopted many of the existing governmental systems, and for the most part their assumption of power did not disrupt the lives of the lower and middle classes. Yet in order to establish complete administrative control, the Company embarked on a quest not only to “understand” the peoples over which they ruled but to educate these individuals so as to be effective participants in the emerging sociopolitical framework.

The East India Company believed that in order to effectively manage their new territory an understanding of the languages, history, and politics of the region was critical. Warren Hastings founded the Calcutta *Madrasa* for cultivation of Arabic and Persian studies in 1781. And in 1792 Lord Cornwallis founded the Sanskrit College at Benares. These two institutions zealously collected original manuscripts and copies of oriental materials, made cheap by the spread of printing technology. They inaugurated a new era in the field of academic studies and marked the beginning of official support for

⁹ For more information on the spread of British control see figure 3.

the promotion of Oriental learning. Fort William College Library, founded in 1800 in Kolkata, followed in the tradition of the Calcutta *Madrasa* and the Sanskrit College. It built a large collection of books and manuscripts to supplement its courses of study in Arabic, Persian, and Hindustani. Some of the most magnificent specimens in the oriental collection came from the dismantled library of Tipu Sultan, a southern ruler who was defeated by the East India Company in 1799.

The most well-known and influential intellectual institution was the Asiatic Society. Founded in Kolkata in 1784 by Sir William Jones, the Society's purpose was to support Oriental scholarship. Its investigative scope was all-encompassing; in order to fully penetrate the mysteries of India, Jones asserted that the Society's "enquiries [would] be extended to whatever is performed by man or produced by nature" (Memorandum of Articles of Society, as cited in Asiatic Society, p. 2) The Society's membership, like its collection, grew rapidly. The organization and its intellectual aims attracted some of the brightest scholars, who would shape Oriental discourse and set the foundation for how the West would understand and interact with the subcontinent. Some of the most lasting contributions were in the field of Islamic and Hindu law, archeology, geography, and linguistics.

In 1804, the Asiatic Society opened a branch library in Bombay. It received collections from the Medical and Literary Society of Bombay (founded 1789) and was conceived as being public in function. In 1805 the East India Company, recognizing the Society's contributions to Oriental scholarship, gifted them a plot of land on the corner of Park Street and Chowringhee in Calcutta. The new building provided much needed space for housing the Society's growing collection of books, manuscripts, and other historical artifacts. Three years later, the government defrayed the cost of the library's monthly

expenses on the condition that it would provide unrestricted accessibility to the public. The physical centrality of the Society's new building within the British section of Calcutta and the financial support provided by the Company attest to the Society's importance in the propagation of information to its British constituencies. Many histories herald the Asiatic Society's libraries as being the first and most prominent examples of government sponsorship for the creation of public libraries in India. More importantly they mark official support of books as a mode of knowledge transmission.

Another important step in the development of public libraries in India occurred in 1830, with the closing of Fort William College. A vast majority of the library's oriental materials were shifted to the Asiatic Society, but the bulk of the European materials were transferred to the newly formed Calcutta Public Library, which opened in October 1835. It claimed to be open to all ranks and classes without distinction, but the Calcutta Public Library was still essentially a subscription library and by 1890, its membership and its collections had gone into decline (Datta, 1970).

The Governor-General-in-Council, dismayed at the "limited character of the facilities for research which [were] available to the student" (Datta, 1970, p. 103), felt it was the government's duty to provide such an institution. In 1902, the Imperial Library Act was passed and the Calcutta Public Library was combined with the Secretariat Library to become the National Library. The new institution was intended to be "a library of reference, a working place for students, and a repository of material for the future historians of India, in which, so far as possible, every work written about India at any time can be seen and read" (Taher, 2001, p. 126). It should be noted that this national public library was not so much the property of the general public, but rather a

class of educated individuals. How did this attitude towards libraries filter down to the general public and affect their position regarding library use?

Collecting information on the indigenous people, and creating repositories for storing such knowledge, was only one aspect of the colonial mission. The British needed to create an education system that would support and reinforce their political and economic control of the region. Up until this point, institutions of learning remained relatively segregated along class and religious lines. The Sanskrit *tols* (colleges) were exclusively reserved for the *Brahman* class. Vernacular schools accepted members of the *Brahman*, *Ksatriya*, and *Vaisya* classes as both students and teachers. Within this system of Hindu education, the lower classes were often excluded although some exceptions do exist. For example, in Gujarat, the *wanees* (trading class) and *coonbees* (peasant class) were counted amongst those castes which had the right to education (Shukla, 1983). Those schools that did not serve as preparatory institutions for enrollment in the Sanskrit *tols*, had a curriculum that was vocationally oriented and served to impart “literacy and numeracy useful for small trade, revenue collection, and related activities” (Shukla, 1983, p. 402).

The educational systems introduced under Muslim rule that existed in this time period were of two types. The Persian schools enrolled both Hindu and Muslim students of courtly and bureaucratic background and served as finishing schools for government service. The *madrasas* were attended predominantly by Muslims given the curriculum’s emphasis on the study of Islam. Students within the *madrasas* consisted of children across? the highest and lowest socioeconomic classes.

Sureshachandra Shukla (1983) maintains that these schools catered to “specific caste groups and specific occupational-cultural purposes” (p. 402). Each institution

operated relatively independently since there was no organizing system between the schools. Institutional segregation and lack of wide-spread regulation at the educational level “reflected appropriately the contemporary social and political structure” (Shukla, 1983, p. 402).

The introduction of the English educational system did more than just articulate the connections between schools for various age and achievement levels. It sought to organize the various societal classes under a single stratification system and promote British acculturation (Shukla, 1983). In his often quoted 2 February 1835 *Minute on Indian Education* Thomas Macaulay stated that the government “must at present do [its] best to form...a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (Bureau of Education, 1965, p. 116). Ian Copland (2006) asserts that such a system within education:

...appealed to the government, because, even as it made the Raj look appropriately benevolent, it also promised to buttress its hegemony. The more Westernized the Company’s native subjects became, the more they would be able to understand why they were required to contribute to its revenues, and the more they would learn to ‘appreciate every other benefit’ which they derived from British rule. Additionally, these socialized subjects would possess an instinctive ‘submission to authority’ – a trait that the British in India were naturally keen to cultivate. (p. 1040)

The Company did not have the funds to effectively educate all of the people under their rule, and so turned some of the responsibility over to missionary control.

Missionaries had been active in India since the initial periods of European settlement. Early Dutch missionaries emphasized education of the young and aimed at inculcating the use of books, an activity which many noted was not promoted in indigenous schools. Even as late as 1915, Asa Don Dickenson, an American library specialist working in Punjab noted: “It is characteristic of the Indian student to desire to sit at the feet of one

trusted and beloved master...which is being too surely fostered by shutting the student away from all but a single textbook” (Nagar, 1990, p. 29) Missionaries sought to counteract this “dependence” on the guru by introducing libraries at the primary and upper primary school levels, and encouraging their use both in and out of the formal class setting. Libraries were a way of challenging the socioculturally imputed information authority of the elite class.

In addition to the work done at the primary and secondary school level, missionaries were instrumental in establishing several colleges in India. One of the most prominent was Forman Christian College in Lahore (in what is now modern day Pakistan), established in 1886 by the Presbyterians. The founder of the college set up the Social Service League (later the League of Service Library), which conducted literacy campaigns, challenging traditional notions of formal education in the acquisition of knowledge (Taher & Davis, 1994).

Missionaries and other Christian organizations were also interested in the establishment of libraries outside of the formalized educational system. The Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge is most famous for introducing the first circulating library in Calcutta in 1709 (Taher & Davis, 1994), and was instrumental in assisting to develop many libraries throughout India. Between the years 1726 and 1741, the Society entered into an agreement with the East India Company which allowed for the shipment of books at no charge. The East India Company once again extended the favor of free shipping to the Society near the end of the 18th century, which played a significant role in the establishment of Fort William College Library in 1800.

Social factors such as religion, education, and political aims did their part to drive the development of libraries during this period, but the introduction of the printing press

revolutionized the function of the book. The presses cut production costs involved in making a book, thus materials could be attained cheaply by a wider audience. Mass production also allowed for the wide-distribution of materials in a short period of time. And publications in vernacular languages reached a non-English educated section of society. The book trade became more lucrative, and literary societies began to emerge. Under the Europeans, knowledge became a market commodity.

Library history of Gujarat

Gujarat is perhaps one of the most advanced states in regards to the establishment of libraries. Archeological evidence suggests that there were several influential Buddhist sites in Gujarat in the first millennium C.E. One such site was that of Vadnagar, in the modern district of Mehsana (fig. 4), which was visited by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang in 640 C.E. As the Buddhist communities went into decline, they were replaced by Islamic institutions established during the Sultanate and later Mughal periods.

Approximately 250 years prior to the establishment of Muslim political influence in Gujarat, a saint named Baba Rehan came from Baghdad accompanied by forty disciples with the aim of propagating Islam. S. K. Allauddin and R. K. Rout (1996) suggest that several *madrasas* and libraries were established at this time. Yet the real efflorescence in library development within Gujarat followed Allauddin Khilji's defeat of Karandev Vaghela, the Hindu ruler of Gujarat, in 1297. It is with this decisive battle that Gujarat effectively became a part of the Delhi Sultanate. Approximately a century later, Zafar Khan, the viceroy to the Delhi Sultanate, broke loyalty with the emperor, and declared himself independent, thus beginning the Sultanate of Gujarat. He assumed the title Muzzafar Shah, and the capital city at Ahmedabad was established under his

grandson Ahmad Shah. More importantly, in the state of Baroda, the city of Patan became one of the seats of scholarship for the Islamic state. Patan had served as the ancient capital of Gujarat and the center of Hindu learning, and its established infrastructure played a part in its adoption as the nucleus of scholarship in the newly formed political state.

The *Sultans* were great patrons of the arts and learning, and as described earlier, the rulers of Gujarat did their part to promote scholarship by establishing many institutions of learning and providing for their continued maintenance. Foreign scholars were also invited to the courts to produce works for the advancement of intellectual inquiry. Nobles and statesmen followed in the Sultan's tradition and also amassed large collections of books.

At the same time, there was also a substantial community of Jains in Gujarat, many of whom numbered amongst the wealthier members of society. They too sponsored schools and colleges amongst other social institutions. As previously detailed, Jain followers adopted a written tradition around the fifth century C.E. Over the years monks within Jainism were steadily encouraged to seek higher education and produce research (Datta, 1970). It is also interesting to note that the Jain population as a whole registers as having one of the highest rates of literacy within India. According to the 1932 Census, Jains had the second highest rate of literacy (57.7 percent) in the state of Baroda (Parsis had the highest rate at 79.6). They were followed in rank order by Christians (39.2), Muslims (25.4), and Hindus (19.8) (Kooiman, 2002).

Christian missionaries, who played a major role in the propagation of libraries in other parts of India, were prohibited by the rulers of Baroda from entering their territories (Kooiman, 2002). Thus missionaries, forced to operate from boarder areas, were unable

to establish institutes of learning within core populations in Baroda. It should be noted here that Christian missionaries found their greatest following amongst the lower classes, and of all the religions in existence at the turn of the twentieth century, Christian missionaries did the most to inculcate the use of books amongst this population. The absence of their influence in Baroda should be taken into account when analyzing the ways in which people adopted the novel system introduced by the *Maharaja Sayajirao*.

The *Maharaja Sayajirao*: Ruler and Reformer

The public library movement in Baroda was ultimately the sole promotion of Sayajirao Gaekwad. Shrimant Gopalrao Gaekwad was born in a little village named Kavhana on 17 March 1863. A descendant of the Gaekwad dynasty through a past morganatic marriage, Gopalrao, who was never expected to attain the throne, spent his childhood far removed from any vestiges of royalty and was virtually illiterate. Upon the death of the *Maharaja Khanderao* in 1870, Gopalrao's destiny took an unexpected turn.

Initially, Khanderao's brother Malharrao usurped the throne. He immediately sent Khanderao's wife, the *Maharani* Jamnabai, into exile in Pune; a measure that ensured she could not exercise her husband's right, which had been prevented by his death, to adopt an heir. It is said that in his five years of tyrannical and corrupt rule, the state of Baroda so declined that the British Government had to intervene in the name of justice, law and order (Sergeant, 1928). Malharrao was arrested on 14 January 1875 on suspicion of attempting to poison the British Resident¹⁰, Colonel Robert Phayre.

Although the committee chosen to investigate the guilt of Malharrao reached a deadlock

¹⁰ British Residents were official diplomats who lived and worked in smaller, self-governing entities or vassal states as political advisors to a single native ruler or body of nobles from a grouping of princely states.

in regards to his involvement, they did however agree that he should be deposed for the good of the state. Malharrao's deposition occurred on 18 April 1875, and the British, who were reticent to annex the state of Baroda, began the search for a new ruler who would be acceptable both to the people of Baroda and the British Government.

On 2 May 1875, the *Maharani* Jamnabai returned to Baroda and suggested that her husband's right of adoption be transferred to her so that the "succession of a new *Maharaja* would be right in Hindu eyes" (Sergeant, 1928, p. 19). Granted this special favor, Jamnabai called for a gathering of all members of the Gaekwad family. With the assistance of Madhavrao Tanjorkar, generally known as Sir T. Madhavrao, Jamnabai set about the task of selecting an heir that would "meet with the Indian Government's approval, as someone of malleable age was wanted, who might be shaped according to the right ideas" (Sergeant, 1928, p. 23). The thirteen year old Gopalrao was thus adopted by the *Maharani* on 25 May 1875. He was coroneted two days later, at which time he was given the name of Sayajirao.

Until Sayajirao came of age he ruled under a Council of Regency, during which time he was rigorously groomed for the position of *Maharaja*. Sir T. Madhavarao, who had previously served as *Dewan* of Travancore for fourteen years followed by a short stint as *Dewan* of Indore, remained as an advisor and instructed the young ruler on the finer points of state administration. Two Indian tutors were hired to instruct the boy in reading and writing of Marathi, the language spoken in Sayajirao's village. This was later supplemented by lessons in Gujarati, the majority language of Baroda, and Urdu, the language of Baroda's Muslim subjects.

Yet within a few months Sir Richard Meade, an agent to the Governor General, reported that the physical and intellectual conditions for the boy's learning were subpar,

and suggested that a “*Raja*’s school” be opened. This school would be attended by other members of the Gaekwad family as well as children from elite local families, and presided over by a “proper qualified English gentleman” (Sergeant, 1928, p. 28). These suggestions would be taken up by P. S. Melville, who succeeded Meade and at the end of 1875; F. A. H. Elliot, the then Director of Public Instruction of Berar, was selected to oversee the Maharaja’s education.

Sayajirao progressed quickly and by 1877 he had far outstripped his fellow classmates. In 1878, Elliot remarked that chemistry had been added to the curriculum and goes on to further describe the *Maharaja*’s academic schedule as being filled with lessons in arithmetic, history, geography, political economy as well as daily translation work, frequent essays to improve his English style, and conversations on given subjects (Sergeant, 1928). In a span of approximately five years the young Maharaja was “forced to acquire a totality of knowledge which would have necessitated a prolonged study extending, maybe, twelve years for an ordinary student” (Nagar, 1969, p. 25).

Sayajirao’s studies were supplemented by readings from the palace library collection of over 20,000 volumes. Existing volumes still bare some of his notes and observations. When later asked about his educational experience, Sayajirao stated: “I devoutly and zealously utilized all the resources at my command in acquiring such knowledge as I could from reading good and useful books” (Nagar, 1969, p. 232). This quote indicates an early acknowledgement of the utility of libraries and this recognition is perhaps a contributing factor in the Maharaja’s later desire to develop a system of libraries throughout his state. Just as the library had helped to advance Sayajirao intellectually, socially, and politically, he hoped that its services could similarly be availed upon by Baroda’s public.

In order for libraries to be most effective, Sayajirao not only had to create social awareness of libraries, but also an environment that was not characterized by drastic social disparities. Shera (1949) identifies the success of the American public library system as being partly dependent upon the homogeneity of the population within the United States. When there is a majority of the population that lives, thinks, and believes in a particular way, then support for social agencies is more easily and readily gained. Sayajirao undertook many social amelioration programs to bring about religious and gender equality to prepare a greater part of the population for participation in and advancement of life long learning, in which public libraries played a major part.

Nagar (1983) maintains that it is Sayajirao's rural upbringing and his understanding of the hardships and inconveniences of village life that are primarily responsible for his emphasis on programs promoting the uplift of the common people. Nagar asserts, "Sayajirao believed in building at the base. The majority of the people lived in the villages. They were the core of the society which he wanted to bring up. He realized that the State would not achieve real progress until the villages were given full opportunity to develop" (1983, p. 19).

In order to do this, Sayajirao restored the ancient system of self-government in the villages, known as *panchayats*. *Panchayat* comes from the Sanskrit word *panch* for five, and is a term applied to an assembly of five village elders, usually male, who perform administrative functions. By reinstating this local system, Sayajirao hoped that provincial areas would gain a sense of autonomy and begin to work towards their own self-sufficiency; only when the villages developed could the State experience real progress. This also synchronously worked to give him greater latitude in terms of political influence needed to enact his social reforms. The *panchayats* presence in each

village assured that there was a mediating body between the village and the state, through which Sayajirao could communicate his vision of social uplift.

Sayajirao took up the call of both his English and Indian predecessors for the amelioration of the condition of women. In a memorandum of 1885 he stated: “Women regulate the social life of a people, and men and women rise or fall together” (Sergeant, 1928, p.208). In 1902, going against established Hindu tradition, Sayajirao passed a law to permit the remarriage of Hindu widows. Within Hinduism, it was believed that a widowed woman was inauspicious and as such was not to participate in religious rituals or auspicious social events. Following their husband’s death, although they were to be treated with respect, they in essence became pariahs. Reformers had been working to end such discrimination since the beginning of the nineteenth century, and Sayajirao gave steadfast support to such activities.

Sayajirao identified three other social obstacles in the uplift of women at the Social Conference of the Indian National Congress in 1904. These were early marriage, strict *purdah*, and the denial of the women’s right to education (Sergeant, 1928). In regards to this first impediment, Sayajirao once again undertook legislative measures and passed the Infant Marriage Prevention Act in 1904. The second restriction against women, *purdah*, which in Urdu literally means veil or curtain, and in relation to women often refers to a type of seclusion, was practiced by both Hindu and Muslim women particularly of the upper classes. In an attempt to influence female liberation, Sayajirao’s wife gave up her *purdah* to sit with him during formal ceremonies. In 1911, the *Maharani* published a book in collaboration with S. M. Mitra entitled *The Position of Women in Indian Life*, in which she suggested that on account of the lack of systematic female cooperation progressive schemes were bound to fail (Sergeant, 1928). The last

and possibly most wide-spread obstacle for the advancement of women was the lack of proper education. When Sayajirao was invested with the full powers of the *Maharaja* in 1881 only eight girls' schools existed with less than six hundred pupils. Early in his career, Sayajirao began to encourage the enrollment of girls in schools and sponsored the establishment of all-girls institutes for this purpose. By 1901, just twenty years later, the number of schools had risen to nearly 100, and over eight thousand girls were receiving an education within them, while another nearly four thousand girls were attending mixed Government schools. In another ten years, the number of all-girls' schools had more than tripled with an enrollment of around 28,000, and about equal that number of girls attending co-ed institutions. After 1911, this trend in growth slows, but progress can still be seen (Nagar, 1969).

Another noteworthy element of Sayajirao's social amelioration program was his attempt to foster religious understanding, both within the varying *varnas* of Hinduism and between different religious groups. He stated: "Forget all differences of race and religion, caste and creed. Whether Hindu, Muslim, or Christian, for our salvation, you must unite under one banner as one nation" (Nagar, 1969, p. 231). In Sayajirao's opinion, India could not become a nation while it was divided by differences. In a speech supporting the *Aryasamaj* movement for the removal of the disabilities of the depressed classes, Sayajirao says that "for the progressive development of a society...it is necessary that a social and national consciousness...be created...Those that are backward must be brought on the same level as the more advanced, and the responsibility for doing this rests on the later" (Sergeant, 1928, p. 217). To back his words with action, the Maharaja personally visited *Antyajas* ("Untouchables") in their homes and schools. He induced

members of his cabinet to do the same and promoted such interaction within the community of Baroda.

Sayajirao also undertook many municipal projects for the uplift of his state, including the construction of dams for irrigation purposes and the provision of clean, potable water for Baroda's citizens. In 1907, Sayajirao made large financial concessions for the improvement of the state in honor of the Silver Jubilee of his reign. Money was provided to open two boarding houses for "Untouchables," two charitable institutions for the poor, and four hospitals. Additionally, over half a million rupees were provided for the construction of public wells (Sergeant, 1928). Throughout his reign, he invested heavily in railways as a means to connect distant areas both economically and politically. This network would be the backbone of the Traveling Library services. But Sayajirao's greatest achievement, by his own confession, was the establishment of compulsory, free primary education.

Sayajirao was fascinated by those countries which he considered to be industrially, economically, and socially advanced—qualities which he sought to develop within his territories. He therefore spent a great deal of time traveling and studying in the West. Travel, he maintained, was the highest form of education (Sergeant, 1928, p. 91). In an inaugural address to the Industrial Conference in 1906, he insisted on the overseas training of young Indians, particularly in the field of industry. "Let no time-honored prejudices deter you from travelling in other parts of the earth," he urged his audience, for it will give, "that new life, that new culture, those new ideas, which even the most gifted and advanced nations always receive by mixing with other people, and which India needs, perhaps, more than any other civilized nation" (Sergeant, 1928, p. 91)

It was in 1906 that Sayajirao made his first trip to the United States. During his sojourn, the *Maharaja* made inquiries into the evolution of labor unions and America's industrial development. After visiting Colorado Springs he conceived of starting a paper-making industry in Baroda (Sergeant, 1928). He sought information regarding the latest agricultural advances and even sent home various kinds of seeds to be experimented with in India. Sayajirao also gathered information on child-rearing and circulating libraries. But the subject of greatest interest to Sayajirao was the American education system. He made an in-depth study of the system and engaged an educationalist, Dr. Cuthbert Hall, to inspect the schools of Baroda and suggest improvements.

In the following year, as part of the Silver Jubilee concessions, Sayajirao formally introduced free, compulsory primary education in Baroda. But the *Maharaja's* support of institutions of learning had begun long before this. His Highness took the first practical step towards founding a State-aided education system in 1891. He ordered that in every village where there were sixteen children ready for elementary education, a school should be opened; schoolmasters were to be viewed as servants of the village, and receive a salary paid by the Revenue Department; and the Education Department would provide grants-in-aid to help defray the cost of upkeep. In the span of two years over six hundred new primary schools were opened and maintained (Sergeant, 1928).

Up until 1893, education was not compulsory. To determine the feasibility of such an endeavor, Sayajirao began an experiment in the taluka of Amreli. Sayajirao writes: "I cannot determine a policy till I can definitely find out by experience whether the State can bear the burden of such an expensive plan of education" (Sergeant, 1928, p.199). The *Maharaja* realized that established traditions could not be overcome by "legislative violence" (Sergeant, 1928, p. 201), so at first there was no penalty for non-

compliance. The experiment was successful and at the end of 1904, the number of schools established with compulsory attendance was fifty-two with an enrollment of over 5,000 students, just over 2,000 of which were girls. So in 1906, declaring: “Education is absolutely necessary for the realization of my ambition and wishes, and for the success of my policy” (Nagar, 1983, p. 22), Sayajirao passed an act in support of state-wide compulsory education; the major public announcement was made at the following year’s Silver Jubilee festivities. Baroda became the first state not only among native states, but in all of British India, to have such a system.

Education is a great equalizing factor in society. Mehrotra, Panchamukhi, Srivastava, and Srivastava (2005) connect national rises in education levels with increases in standards of living and a corresponding increase in a society’s capacity to compete in an accelerated knowledge/innovation economy. The public library movement in Baroda was a natural extension of the Gaekwad’s enthusiasm for education, and his desire to create an analytical and technological society. The *Maharaja’s* efforts may be some of the first in creating a learning nation (or in this case, state) in which emphasis is placed on systems that contribute to the development of its society. These systems are traditionally defined by formal education, but in recent years development literature has placed more emphasis on alternative learning centers, such as libraries, as a way of promoting life long learning and reflective analysis.

For the people: The beginnings of the public library movement

During his years of education Sayajirao was indoctrinated with values supporting the authority of the written work and the ideology that books could be used to advance

one's position socially, economically, and intellectually. For Sayajirao, the library represented a way to equalize and elevate mankind. He stated:

A library is instituted to preserve the record of the deeds of men, and the thoughts of men, for the instruction and enlightenment of future generations, so that those who are about to start to do their share of the work of the world, their own part in the advance of the human race in intelligence, in civilization, in power, may start fair from the basis of achievement gained by the countless generations before them. (Nagar, 1983, p. 23)

And the *Maharaja* certainly read books, particularly those concerned with industrial advancement, as a manner of exploring new ways to develop his state. When asked about the applicability of information found in printed resources, Sayajirao replied, “I [study] them, and [endeavor] to apply my knowledge to everyday problems, trying to serve my people and secure their happiness” (Nagar, 1983, p. 157).

It should come as no surprise then that as Sayajirao embarked in the novel enterprise of providing free primary education to his subjects, he should also envision a method through which people could connect with information resources. Sayajirao chose “education as the rock on which to reconstruct a new social and economic life” (Nagar, 1983, p. 22) yet he “firmly believed that to provide education without providing the means to continue it throughout life was like building a house without a roof to cover it” (Nagar, 1983, p.23). Life-long learning was essential for the intellectual vitality of the state and Sayajirao viewed the library as the agency through which a respect and promotion of learning could be fostered in generations to come, stating:

Schemes of library organization and wide-spread circulation of books are only a coping stone in the edifice of compulsory education for the masses. For our people coming out from schools and colleges we must provide a continual feast of books, magazines and newspapers lest their love for learning just kindled at their academic Altar gets soon extinguished for want of further fuel in the form of free libraries and a supply of healthy literature. (Nagar, 1969, p. 162)

Sayajirao was most concerned with establishing libraries as a means of continuing education in rural areas where literacy was at its lowest. Just as he had substantiated the economic feasibility of compulsory education prior to enacting state-wide enforcement, Sayajirao tested the expediency of a public library system. The experiment began in 1901 and was based in a town surrounded by a handful of villages. His Highness elected not to establish the library in a “progressive” region since he knew that in order to demonstrate the value of a library it must be placed in an area where it could make the greatest impact. The library’s purpose was to provide books that would “enlighten the masses, develop their general knowledge, and make them better citizens of the country and responsible members of society” (Nagar, 1983, p. 25)

Although published histories of the Baroda library movement do not provide any detailed information about this experiment, it is assumed that the outcomes were favorable based on the fact that in 1906 while making his first tour of the United States, Sayajirao cabled his Education Commissioner to say: “It is necessary to establish libraries in every *taluka* or *peta-mahal* so that the rural people may get opportunities to read books, newspapers, and periodicals” (Nagar, 1983, p. 26). The push for rural libraries coincided with the beginning of the drive for free universal education. Sayajirao provided an initial grant of over thirty thousand rupees “for opening libraries in villages for the diffusion of knowledge and the awakening of interest in educational and industrial movements of the present time” (Nagar, 1983, p. 26)

Sayajirao felt that establishing libraries—meaning the provision of books and periodicals—was not enough; the people needed to be actively engaged with this new source of information. In order to develop a program with human-centered services, Sayajirao engaged the aid of Motibhai Narsinhabhai Amin, the Headmaster of the Anglo-

Vernacular School of Petlad. Motibhai was a philanthopist who also strongly supported the growth of libraries. At that time there were few librarians, and those who had been trained in some manner were reluctant to move to remote districts. Motibhai therefore turned to newly graduated teachers posted in village areas for help. At the Baroda (Male) Teachers Training College Motibhai launched the *Maharaja's* library proposal, which he maintained would benefit both the teachers and the community in which they worked.

Motibhai intimated that the working environment of the newly trained educators lacked the intellectual “culture” of the urban center. Yet this academic isolation could be overcome by helping to establish local libraries. In doing so not only could the teachers maintain a somewhat indirect contact with the learned community, but they would synchronously promote the cultural advancement of the village people. On 1 July 1906, Motibhai inaugurated the *Mitra Mandal* (Society of Friends) Libraries. Upon arriving at their posts, each teacher began to promote the idea of an information center. If they could raise 10 or 15 *rupees* between both the local governing body and the general public in their region, then they would be sent an additional 20 or 30 *rupees* worth of books and periodicals. With the help of these teachers, thirty rural libraries were set up within the first year. In areas where funds were limited, Motibhai established reading rooms stocked only with newspapers and journals.

A year later, believing that further government involvement was necessary, the Maharaja employed the assistance of the Minister of Education, instructing him to prepare a proposal for opening circulating libraries that would be “instituted through the State’s financial assistance” (Nagar, 1969, p. 38). It is important to note that the government funds were really only meant for the initial set up of the library, and that

ultimately, the library was to be administered by the people and supported mainly through their own funds (Nagar, 1969). The inaugural grant consisted of a set of books related to literature, arts, and sciences worth one hundred *rupees* and a lump-sum amount of 125 *rupees* for the purchase of books in translation published with State aid. The ensuing annual government contribution was intended solely for the purchase of newspapers, journals, and other periodicals. Aside from this concession there was no on-going government provision for the purchase of books, whether as replacements or as additions to the collection.

Under the Education Department's scheme the community was thus required to rent or provide a building to house the collection and provide the necessary furniture. Citizens were expected to contribute to a "Library Maintenance Fund" for the purchase of books and payment of internal administration. These libraries were to be managed by the school teacher, who often received little or no pay for their efforts. Neighboring villages could use the library provided they contributed to the library reserve. Books and newspapers were available to read on the premises without charge, but could be borrowed for external use by paying a nominal fee.

Based on the number of circulating libraries established within the first year, they appeared to be a success. By 1908, 74 *Mitra Mandal* libraries and 26 circulating libraries had been established. Motibhai approached the government with the proposition of assisting established reading rooms to become circulating libraries. It was agreed that for a contribution of 25 *rupees* from the reading rooms, the government would provide 100 *rupees* in books and 15 *rupees* annually for the purchase of periodicals. In 1909, an additional 26 *Mitra Mandal* libraries and 46 circulating libraries had been set up. Ten of the 46 circulating libraries were reading rooms which had raised the 25 *rupees* to become

a circulating library. The following year saw the establishment of only 4 *Mitra Mandal* and 14 Circulating libraries, eight of which were transformed reading rooms. In 1910 only 240 libraries existed; the growth of libraries in the last two years being only about half that established in the first two.

Scholars maintain that the government's inadequate and poorly designed funding scheme was to blame for the stagnation. The "Library Maintenance Fund" of many existing libraries was insufficient to provide for the upkeep and promotion of the library. In some cases, the community was so poor that they could not be expected to monetarily provide for what was considered a dispensable luxury. In other areas, only a few new titles could be purchased each year with the library funds and the lack of new materials caused community interest to wane. Additionally, many of these libraries were not housed in proper buildings. Having sprung up wherever there was space to accommodate for a reading room, the libraries often suffered from poor storage that led to deterioration of materials. What little compensation there was for the teacher-librarians was not enough to motivate them to keep the library open for more than a few hours a week, let alone continue the drive for library promotion. Overall it can be suggested that the high rate of development in the first two years was somewhat of a Hawthorne effect; once the novelty wore off the increase in library productivity slowed.

In *The Baroda Library Movement*, J. S. Kudalkar, who assumed the position of director for the State Library Department upon Borden's departure, reflects upon this critical moment in history:

If the library was to strike deeper roots in the soil, it required a thorough reconstruction of the existing system, and such a reconstruction required to be planned by some one possessing an intimate knowledge of the intricate working of public library organizations in other countries." (Nagar, 1969, p. 48)

Sayajirao, shared Kudalkar's sentiments, and fearing that his program would fail completely without such an intervention he appointed William Alanson Borden, a lecturer at Columbia's Library School, to "advise, plan, and implement a state library and a statewide library development plan" (Taher & Davis, 1994, p. 79) . Having a strong background in library practices and principles and a history of implementing innovative library programming in New England, Borden accepted the *Maharaja's* invitation.

Borden studied under Charles A. Cutter as a pupil-assistant at the Boston Athenaeum. In 1885 he assumed the position of librarian at the Reynolds Library, Rochester, New York, where he worked promoting rural libraries. Two years later, he also began lecturing at the School of Library Economy at Columbia College, as an associate to Melvil Dewey. From 1887 to 1910, he worked at the Library of the Young Men's Institute, New Haven, Connecticut, where he focused on library promotion. In order to draw the attention of younger users, he acquired a collection of moths and butterflies for the reading room. As a means of reaching a less traditional client base, Borden participated in door to door delivery of books. He was also instrumental in initiating the formation of the Connecticut Library Association. The knowledge gained from each of the above activities allowed Borden to develop a system with unique attributes that catered to Baroda's needs.

In November 1910, Borden became director of the newly created State Library Department in Baroda. Motibhai was promoted as his assistant and beginning in 1911, the two toured Baroda to assess the situation facing libraries. At the tour's completion, Borden quickly set to work. First and foremost, he began developing the country's first state level network of libraries. Borden was impressed by what had already been

established by Sayajirao and Motibhai and therefore sought to create a streamlined and efficient administrative apparatus to tie it all together. He divided the Library Department into two executive sections: the Central Library at Baroda and three country libraries; making the management of Baroda's dispersed libraries possible.

The Central Library in Baroda began with 20,000 books and manuscripts from the palace library, many of which dated from the period of Sayajirao's education under the Council of Regency. The Central Library served as the administrative headquarters of planning and technical work for all libraries in the state. It was responsible for putting existing libraries on a better footing and opening new libraries wherever possible; a responsibility entrusted to them by the Education Department at the end of the 1911 fiscal year. It also maintained service sections within its headquarters such as a central reading room, ladies library and reading room, and a children's library. The children's library was "a highly developed section of the Library with commendable facilities for reading books, seeing educative pictures and charts, and enjoying enough indoor games, amusements and occupations of the right sort" (Chakravarty, 1962, p. 4). Chakravarty (1962) considers it to be the first and foremost children's library in India. This attention to youth may have been a specific contribution of Borden given his work in the United States. It was also a very strategic move, for if children could be inculcated with the idea that libraries and reading could be enjoyable, then they would be more likely to continue such activities as adults.

The three country libraries were responsible for the direct administration of village and town libraries. They communicated with the Central Library, serving as an instrumental mediator in the establishment of new libraries in areas with public demand. Their most important responsibility was to manage the extensive system of traveling

libraries through which many primary schools and villages without libraries received reading materials. Traveling libraries were sets of books, from twenty-five to fifty in number, on different subjects¹¹. They were circulated to serve several purposes: to create a taste for reading, to promote a demand for a library in areas where no libraries existed, and to supply a fresh stock of books to an established library to maintain readers' interest (Nagar, 1969; 1983).

Another considerable undertaking of the country libraries was the Visual Instruction Branch, a department which served the illiterate portion of the population. The collections consisted of varying types of audio-visual materials including photographs, maps, charts, picture post-cards, stereographs, magic lantern slides, and cinematograph films (Nagar, 1983). The administrators hoped to foster a sense of community by involving the illiterate portion of the population; making it clear that educational background, or lack thereof, did not bar anyone from participating at the library.

The foundation of a centralized library system also allowed for the creation of effective buying practices. The administrative link between libraries led to stronger communication and coordination. For the first time, the practice of bulk purchases was feasible. Such purchases meant that individual libraries could attain materials at cheaper rates, and thus could be better stocked. This alliance was also influential when it came to working with booksellers. Once these libraries proved that they had buying power, publishers and distributors began to compete for their business.

¹¹ In the first year of Borden's tenure, there were eighty-three portable libraries containing 2,400 books, membership was recorded at around 2,600, and the total circulation was approximately 7,000 books. By 1914 those numbers had more than doubled. Membership rose to 7,556 and total circulation was 15,303. Increases were also recorded in the 1917-1918 fiscal year when there existed a total of 441 book cases with 15,275 books (Nagar, 1969).

In addition to this administrative system, Borden also has the distinction of opening the first regular school to train library staff in India¹², a task which Konnur (1990) maintains Borden had planned to introduce prior to setting foot in the country. Courses focused on “all the modern requirements of library administration such as accessioning, classifying and cataloging, charging and discharging” (Nagar, 1969, p. 102) in addition to “public library specialization” (Konnur, 1990, p. 85). And such training was vital to the success of the program given that the provision of information in such a form was unprecedented. In order for individuals to be able to fully take advantage of the library, specially trained librarians were critical. In his “Scheme for library training,” Borden himself observes: “These new members are apt to know very little about the books that are in the library, how to get them, or how to use them to the best advantage to themselves. They need much instruction in such matters, and, therefore, the want of a corps of trained, or semi-trained librarians...” (Nagar, 1969, p. 105)

Borden began the first class on 6 March 1911 when, according to the *Report on Public Instruction* for the year 1910-1911 “nowhere in India [had] there been...a single library class attached to any of the libraries where young men and women could be trained in the most up-to-date requirements of library economy” (Nagar, 1969, p. 100). Initially, the classes were held at Baroda College in the mornings so that “the working people could derive the benefit” (Nagar, 1969, p. 57). Yet after the first session of classes, interest waned and the program was scaled back. Courses were then moved to the Central Library where they were continued to a limited degree.

¹² However critics argue that the courses that Borden began never actually became a permanent fixture within Baroda College, and therefore he cannot be credited with the title of the founder of the first library school. It was actually another American, Asa Don Dickinson, who came as a consultant to the Punjab University, who established the first degree granting program in 1915. The school is still in existence today.

Despite this set back, Borden continued to advocate hands-on technical training. He particularly encouraged town librarians to work in the Central Library under his supervision if they could not participate in the theoretical coursework. Towards the end of 1912, Borden proposed a government grant scheme which would provide town librarians with a 12 *rupee*/month stipend to work at the Central Library for 5 months. Borden believed such a scheme would be advantageous not only for the town librarians, but would contribute to the advancement of the State libraries. In order to convince the State, Borden argued that such training would contribute to uniformity of classification throughout the state; properly trained librarians would not only have more organized libraries, but they would be able to assist in training other librarians in surrounding villages, thus creating a more efficient and less expensively run system; engaging town librarians would promote the thorough classification and preparation of vernacular books within the Central Library, and in turn such work, if published as an authoritative catalog, could be used by librarians to reduce duplicity of labor and increase future output (Nagar, 1969). The scheme was accepted, but it appears that after the initial period of scholarship it was discontinued.

Some critics maintain that if the government had provided support for library coursework from the beginning, libraries would have been better prepared to meet patron needs and promote the library mission down the road. Yet the government's stance was appropriately summed up in *Dewan C. N. Seddon's* statement, "In my opinion, indeed, the building of a large central library, the stocking of it with a large number of additional books, and the training of a small body of librarians, are luxuries. It does not appear to me that the time has yet come when such a thing can be considered in any way necessary [underlining in original] to our continued development" (Nagar, 1969, p. 57).

Without full government backing, library practitioners were forced to promote libraries at the grassroots level. Due in part to his previous successes with the Connecticut Library Association, in 1912 Borden induced the members of the Central Library staff to form the Baroda Library Club, the first professional organization of librarians in India. In addition to the Club's goals of propagating the library movement, providing facilities for the exchange of ideas and mutual cooperation, and maximizing funds, the Club had an aim to "cultivate an esteem in the minds of librarians for their profession" (Nagar, 1969, p. 107). For how successful can a movement be if even those who work to promote it do not believe in it?

The Club, under Borden's guidance, launched *Library Miscellany*, the first professional library journal in India in August 1912. It is also considered the first periodical having all-India circulation (Chakravarty, 1962). Articles were published in English, Marathi, and Gujarati, and focused on library form and the development of librarianship in India and abroad. The purpose of the journal was to foster a fraternity between librarians throughout the nation, and incite professional communication. Unfortunately, after just a few years, the journal began to suffer from financial problems. In 1915, the journal was apparently about to be discontinued, but a generous donation from the *Maharaja* gave it a breath of new life. In the following year, it appears that the contributions in Marathi and Gujarati were insufficient; the publication began to alternate between an English/Marathi and an English/Gujarati release dependent upon which language had a sufficient number of articles. By 1919 the journal was discontinued.

Following Borden's departure in 1913, and as indicated by the failing state of the *Library Miscellany* publication, the library movement in Baroda began to decline. The second decade of the 20th century in India was a period of economic hardship caused by

World War I. The purchase of books and supplies, even with the cooperative purchasing power at the state level, was extremely expensive. As a result of these external forces, collections and library use flagged.

During the 1920s, several Gujarati cultural and literary groups emerged. Many of these groups worked for social uplift and a return to what was considered more traditional values. Other groups worked to promote the Gujarati language by sponsoring publications in the vernacular language. One such group was the Gujarat Vernacular Society of Ahmedabad, which upon an annual subscription of 50 *rupees* provided libraries with all the books published within that year by the society as well as a copy of the *Buddhi Prakash* journal. It is important to note that at this time, the emphasis of Gujarati literature began to shift. In the previous period, literature was geared towards a more elite audience, but with the hardships of the War and its aftermath, the arrival of Gandhi (1914) and his nationalist activities, and the beginning of the Russian Revolution (1917), a major transformation in the literary subject matter occurred. The changing trends of the contemporary sociocultural scene were reflected in many works that appealed to the tastes of the masses (Kloss & McConnell, 1989). This movement, combined with the progress made in public education would, according to Barua (1985), play a crucial role in the success of the library movement since “the spread of libraries cannot take place before the spread of education and the development of vernacular literature” (p.166).

Yet the *Maharaja's* well-developed and carefully monitored educational system began to take on a new shape in the 1930s. It should be mentioned that when the program of compulsory education began in 1891, the literacy rate in Baroda was eight percent, which compared correspondingly to the 10 percent literacy rate in British

administered Gujarat. In 1931 on the other hand, Kooiman (2002) notes that Baroda's literacy had climbed to an astounding 20.9 percent, where as the rate in British Gujarat hovered around thirteen percent, and that of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies weighed in around eleven percent. These changes were the result of fifty-seven years of dynamic innovations within educational spending; the budget for education rising from only one percent of the state expenditure in 1876 to approximately 17 percent by 1933 (Kooiman, 2002).

Perhaps driven by such success, the central government pushed to establish village schools at a rapid rate in the mid-thirties. The government opened more schools in the State than they could manage with their limited finances. Nagar (1969) notes: "the object was to provide universal literacy, but mere extension did not permit intensive development" (p. 213). Children acquired only a rudimentary knowledge of the three "Rs" (reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic) under this new compulsory education scheme; such elementary skills were lost soon after leaving school. Thus, the need for libraries became more acute in the eyes of the government. However, this situation was the direct antithesis of the *Maharaja's* original aims, which were to provide quality education so that the library and its collections could serve as a agency for intellectual exploration, not just literacy maintenance.

The government implemented programs for libraries in a manner similar to that for establishing village schools. Officials wanted to set up libraries at all the village schools at a rate of 100 per year. The *Maharaja* feared that there was an emphasis on quantity rather than quality in libraries, and therefore firmly denied the request for funding stating: "A library must be built up as men are built, slowly and carefully and with due consideration of the work to be performed. This is an institution...the work of

which, in the future, may help or mar the man by whose hands that future will be formed” (Nagar, 1969, p. 33). The *Maharaja* felt that traveling libraries could take care of the information need in villages without libraries and that the expense of establishing a library in that many villages without public support was too high and the results too unpredictable (Nagar, 1969). The government did not agree and since funding had been limited by the *Maharaja* they cut grants to established libraries in order to provide for the opening of new ones (Nagar, 1969).

Due in part to the government’s encouragement there was resurgence in propaganda to promote libraries. In the mid 1930s, libraries began to use *Pustakalaya*, a Gujarati publication issued by the Baroda Central Library, as a means of communicating. Each issue contained a monthly calendar of librarians’ duties and called for the organization of local library committee meetings. Many professionals took part in library administration and made recommendations for the betterment of the movement.

Towards the end of the 1930s, India was once again affected by war. It witnessed the rise of new social movements, many of which were fueled by the fear of foreign invasion. One such campaign was the Quit India Movement, Mohandas Gandhi’s call for the liberation of India which officially began in 1942. According to David Hardiman (2007), the movement’s roots can be found in the feelings of pessimism and defeat evoked by the Japanese entry into the War. Many Gujaratis living in Bombay left the city for their ancestral homes in Gujarat bringing with them stories of the atrocities of war. Merchants and businessmen feared that if Japan invaded India, the British would carry out a scorched earth policy to prevent Axis forces from gaining control of factories and resources. This terror was spurred on by reports of what had happened to Gujarati businessmen in Rangoon when the city was evacuated, and the discrimination against

Indians by the British within Singapore. It was generally felt that the British could not be depended upon in a time of crisis (Hardiman, 2007).

Despite these fears, there were mixed reactions throughout India to Gandhi's call to throw off the yoke of British domination and assert an Indian national identity. The citizens of Gujarat however were some of the movement's greatest supporters. Gujarat was the best-organized province and the Quit India Movement was strongest in the districts under British and Baroda rule (Hardiman, 2007). The resistance lasted for a year, abating in 1943, but it was just a forerunner of the turmoil and unrest that would occur when the British eventually gave India its independence in 1947. The dissolution of British India was marked by the formation of two sovereign states based loosely on religious demographics of the region; these two states were the Dominion of Pakistan and the Union of India. The partition of British India was followed by what is possibly the world's largest migration. It is estimated that anywhere between twelve and fourteen million people fled from one country to the other in the months following Partition. The newly formed governments were completely unprepared for such a mass exodus or the resulting violence. The death toll for the period is most commonly counted at around one million people.

Kooiman (2002) maintains that 1947 was as much a year of separation as it was unification and integration. Many of the princely states merged into the newly established India or Pakistan, shattering the "parochialism of the smaller states...and [giving] way to participation in broader political and socioeconomic frameworks" (Kooiman, 2002, 21). Baroda's merger with the Bombay Province in 1947 represented the beginning of the end of Baroda's identity as an independent entity. Nagar (1969) laments: "Politically and administratively Baroda was turned overnight into a district

only, yet its library was greater than any other district library of the whole of the sub-continent” (p. 322)

It is evident that the Bombay authorities were impressed with the Baroda system. In 1939, members of the Bombay Library Development Committee visited Baroda to observe its library network. The Committee’s observations served as a basis for recommendations to the government in developing the Central Provincial Library in Bombay, as well as three regional libraries at Dharwar, Poona, and Ahmedabad. The government of Bombay hoped that the Bombay library system too would see the growth of a network of libraries spreading to district towns and villages. Yet the Bombay Library Development Committee’s approach to libraries varied dramatically from that at Baroda. Baroda built from the base upwards, where as Bombay began at the top. Their policy was to establish the Central and Regional libraries, and until that time the issue of planning village libraries would be deferred.

At the time Baroda was integrated into the Bombay system, focus still remained on establishing upper-level libraries. Unfortunately, this policy resulted in political neglect as well as insufficient financial resources which ultimately led to the extinction of many village libraries in the former Baroda state. Under the new administration, even the Traveling Library Service, which is said to have reached approximately 1.2 million people, fell into disuse. Baroda’s integration into the national system resulted in the disintegration of one of the most advanced library systems in India at the time.

Understanding Decline

M. L. Nagar (1969, 1983), the foremost scholar on the Baroda Public library movement, identifies the merger between the Baroda and Bombay library systems as one of the most defining factors in the collapse of the Baroda public library system. Yet, he has intimated that if there had existed a “library authority—a statutory, corporate body—in Baroda, which could [have] establish[ed] and control[ed] libraries, independently of the decisions of the government” (Nagar, 1969, p. 301), then it is possible that the system would have had a better chance of surviving. Nagar (1969) states that: “The Library Department was just a branch of the Education Department and had no power to influence the decisions of the government one way or the other. It could only request and carry out the orders of the government whatever they might be” (p.301). Thus once the integration occurred, the Baroda Library Department stood helpless. The existence of an independent authority, on the other hand, may have had the power to advocate for government recognition and supporting legislation.

Nagar (1983) explains that within the Bombay Library Development Committee’s “Prefatory Notes” to its report on libraries, there existed the possibility to modify its policies. The authors of the report explain that “the limitations of the report presented by us are fully realized; in fact these proposals are only of a tentative character, to be modified from time to time in the light of fresh and greater knowledge” (Nagar, 1969, p. 321). Following the merger however, neither the Committee nor the government gave the Baroda system the distinction that it deserved within the new administration, nor were they willing to change their expenditure policies to support any of its vital or far-reaching elements. Although the advocacy of an independent body may have served to save some

elements of the system, it is very likely that despite their efforts much would still have been lost.

Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert Sutton, two of the leading practitioners in the field of evidence-based management, cite studies showing that more than seventy percent of mergers fail to “deliver their intended benefits and destroy economic value in the process” (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006, p. 4). Although evidence-based management theories are most often derived from and applied to corporate situations, the elementary logic of their theories can be applied broadly. Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) identify three elements crucial for a successful merger. First, mergers should never take place between similar-sized companies; second, mergers work best when companies are geographically proximate; and third, and possibly most important, the organizations must have cultural compatibility.

In the first instance, the merger between Baroda and Bombay represents more than just the consolidation of two library systems; it was the fusion of two diverse and equally influential systems of government. What is more, Baroda, which prior to 1947 had existed as a princely state, was being absorbed into a national system, and a newly formed one at that. What were the goals of this new nation? Where was social emphasis placed? And did that emphasis coincide with what had here to fore been aimed at within Baroda?

In looking at national policies, the answer may be no. Although the Congress Party was socialist in nature and did do much for the promotion of the lower classes, emphasis in national development was placed on the upper strata of society. For example, Mehrotra, Panchamukhi, Srivastava, and Srivastava (2005) have criticized the educational focus following Independence on college and university development over

that of primary school advancement as a cause for the continuing low rates of literacy and the growing divide between the upper and lower classes: “Even today, Indian states do not allocate even 50 percent of their education expenditure to the elementary, let alone the primary, level. Instead, India created universities, institutes of engineering and technology, and medical colleges that were heavily subsidized publicly and for decades were free of tuition fees” (Mehrotra et al., 2005, p. 14).

Because Bombay’s library system, which focused on development from the top down, was more inline with the national agenda, it gained political support. The “culture” of the Baroda system focusing on the provision of information access to villages was almost diametrically opposed to the goals of the Bombay system. Pfeffer and Sutton would explain that in this situation adapting for the Baroda system would have required a complete overhaul of the existing policies, not just a slight modification as suggested in the Committee’s prefatory notes.

Although this merger is one of the most prominent and fundamental reasons for the downfall of the Baroda library system, focusing on this aspect of the system’s decline draws awareness away from other social undertones which may be more important in understanding the system’s overall failure. In a warning to scholars of library development within America, Shera (1949) presents this advice which has universal application:

An adequate historical interpretation of the rise of the social library must avoid a point of view that might separate the library as an institutional form from the totality of contemporary agencies of which it was a part. (p. 66)

It is the basic human element, the social history of the library, which to this point has been ignored, that is the quintessential component to understanding not only Baroda’s

situation but also providing the professional field with the key to the current library situation in India and its future uplift.

The *Maharaja* showed tremendous foresight in his eleemosynary undertakings. He wanted to bring about the amelioration of his people and place his state on a level which could compete with the industrially advanced countries of the time period. In order to do so he did not seek to change one or two elements within society, but to create an entirely new social system. In order to do so, Sayajirao studied the industrial, technological, educational, and financial systems of countries such as the United States, and sought to implement many of his observations for the advancement of his own kingdom.

The use of such benchmarking in the establishment of a public library system in Baroda, however, may have played a major factor in its ultimate failure. Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) propose that benchmarking, the act of using another organization's performance and experience to set standards for one's own organization, can be an effective method for developing successful development strategies. Unfortunately, they note that, "most people copy the most visible, obvious, and frequently least important practices" (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006, p.7) often resulting in unsatisfactory or unexpected outcomes. They conclude that most organizations apply benchmarking standards too casually and without a firm understanding of the underlying logic and supporting systems that drive the organization under consideration.

While Sayajirao did much to promote universal primary education, a movement that was greatly responsible for the advancement of literacy and the success of public libraries in America, the two movements were considerably different. Shera (1949) states that in the first half of the nineteenth century American society was marked by four

characteristics that would play a defining role in the push for public education as well as the establishment of public libraries. These four factors were:

- (a) a growing awareness of the ordinary man and his importance to the group, (b) the conviction that universal literacy is essential to an enlightened people, (c) a belief in the practical value of technical studies, and (d) an enthusiasm for education for its own sake. (Shera, 1949, p.221)

With Jackson's election victory, America was moved by a "wave of humanitarianism, benevolence, and the desire for improvement" (Shera, 1949, p. 217). At the same time, there was a general acknowledgement within the population that reading promoted morality. These beliefs ultimately led the population to give great support to those establishments that worked to promote the betterment of the individual. Possibly due in part to the strong public support of popular education, the public education system in America soon outstripped the private system. It is in this movement that Shera's ideologies regarding the status of schools and libraries as 'agencies' of the public will become clear. Just as public education was the apotheosis of society's aim to elevate the standard of living amongst all people, so too was the public library a manifestation of the social belief in self-education. Its actualization was in turn dependent on America's history of social libraries and literary groups, which provided the foundation for this new social movement.

The implementation of compulsory education in Baroda on the other hand, was quite the opposite. In contrast to the situation in America, compulsory education in Baroda was not a manifestation of social desires, but rather a creation of the region's ruler. As opposed to being an agency fashioned on social goals and objectives, it was seen instead as a medium through which social aims and ideologies could be shaped if availed upon. Sayajirao claimed that he had given the people of Baroda all they needed

for their uplift and improvement, and that it was now up to them to use what had been provided (Sergeant, 1928). The fact that the public library movement in Baroda failed may be evidence of the people's lack of faith in such a system of information transfer.

Although Baroda's situation did not exactly match that of America, Sayajirao's efforts can not fully be dismissed. In fact understanding the outcomes of the experiments with compulsory education provide indicators for the reception of the public library. In 1918-1919 the Economic Development Committee reported some very disturbing facts regarding the effects of this new spread education. Education tended to "neither agricultural nor industrial efficiency," instead it supported "the migration of the rural population into the towns, the purposeless activities of the people, and the aversion from manual labour" (Sergeant, 1928, p. 249). Sergeant summarizes the reports' suggestions:

The great need was for vocational training, which must be attended to in the upper primary schools, and still more so in the secondary schools. The whole educational system should be divided into urban and rural, with appropriate studies and specially trained teachers. (Sergeant, 1928, p.249)

However, there was no structure to support this type of education. The great emphasis on primary school left little attention or funds for secondary schools. According to Kooiman (2002) in 1946, there were 2,563 government primary schools with 6,746 teachers in comparison with 41 government secondary schools with 477 teachers. This meant that economically disadvantaged children had to compete for limited spots within the public funded government schools or else be forced to discontinue their studies. Although some families were able to raise the funds for private tuitions, most were not.

Another important point which Mehrotra et al. (2005) advance is that as the rural populations became more educated they began to seek out professions catered to their new skill sets. Most often this could only be accomplished by relocating to urban centers

where such work existed. The rural to urban migration can only be stemmed if “rural non-agricultural employment continues to grow at least as rapidly as the cohort of school leavers” (Mehrotra et al., 2005, p. 13). Even given Sayajirao’s interest in industrial advancement, the economic state of Baroda did not meet this need. Therefore, newly educated individuals were struck with the realization that their investment of time did not have an equally beneficial payout. If the value of education gained in school could not be proved, it so follows that the offerings of the public library too would be discarded.

It is also important to note the level of education provided. Primary education provides for a student up until 14 years of age, yet it is unlikely that the types of materials presented to the libraries would appeal to an individual with this level of education. As mentioned earlier, early success of the movement may have been inhibited by the fact that there was not even a popular literature until the mid-1930s. In contrast, Shera has cited popular literature in America as being one of the elements which induced individuals with lower levels of education to use the public library.

Another important element in understanding the relationship between education and the public library is pedagogy. The pedagogical foundations of the Indian and American educational systems were dramatically different. The Indian education system was, and in many cases still remains, based on rote learning. Within this system the teacher is “regarded as the repository of all knowledge,” and possibly more telling is the characteristic that “no independent investigation is required, and it may in fact be strongly discouraged” (Bopp & Smith, 2001, p. 282). The textbook, if one is available, is referred to but ultimately the teacher’s interpretations are of the most importance. It is this practice of referring to the written work in an informal manner that undermines the information authority of the book.

It is this system against which Ranganathan fought, arguing that libraries would never develop in India as long as this method of teaching continued. He states:

The method of education must help our students in acquiring a dynamic outlook, habit, and attitude, enabling them to steer their course amidst change...To meet such a future, one can at best train the students in the general and flexible techniques likely to serve them in facing the unknown problems of the future. We cannot do this by giving pre-digested facts, by cramming them with information, and by drilling them in skills, determined solely by the passing social and material conditions. (Ranganathan, 1973, p. 43)

Ranganathan further asserted that if reading habits and use of the library were not established through education at a young age, it would be almost impossible to do such by the time students reached the university level. Kumar (1986) writes in support of Ranganathan's views on the importance of school libraries, stating:

Any healthy system ought to have an organic growth, building up from bottom upwards. In any ideal scheme school libraries ought to have priority over college libraries, which in turn should have precedence over university libraries...the pyramid we have built of the academic library system stands upside down because of the over emphasis given to university libraries and virtually total neglect of school libraries. (p. 32)

Yet even at the university level there was much criticism concerning the lack of development and use of libraries. The Calcutta University Commission's *Report*, more commonly known as the Sadler Report of 1917-1919, which examined the state of education within the British Raj, cited the extraordinarily unimportant part played by the library in education as one of the greatest weaknesses of the system. The report maintained that very few universities had good libraries, and even that of the Presidency College, one of the most prominent institutions of the time, was considered deficient. The Commission's findings state:

The student who desires to read widely and to study thoroughly finds serious obstacles in his path...even as far as the university courses are concerned, the college libraries are, as a rule, inadequate; and this inadequacy is even more

marked in the case of books which are not directly connected with the prescribed courses of study. (Calcutta University Commission, 1919, Vol. 2, p. 347)

Asa Don Dickinson, an American librarian, who was invited by the government of Punjab to reorganize the Punjab University Library's classification system and teach modern library methods in 1915, observed that "the average Punjab library as a place where books are kept locked up, the average Punjab librarian a book gaoler or turnkey" (Nagar, 1990, p. 26). In a letter published in the "Editorial Comments" of the *Library Journal*, he observes:

Today, books are impersonal things...mere bricks for the use in construction and enlarging the social edifices of modern civilization. I have so far preached this doctrine to Indian librarians with but indifferent success. Having them used interests them little. Suggestions to unlock the almirahs, to open wide their doors, to invite readers to use their contents, are met with dismay or with smiles and shrugs." (Nagar, 1990, p. 26)

If such conditions existed within the university, where the library was commonly heralded as the center of scholarly inquiry, then one can imagine the attitudes that must have prevailed within public libraries. Dickinson associated this behavior with the history within librarianship of tending to precious manuscripts prior to the introduction of printed materials. Yet what if this action has more to do with the dispersal of information and controlling who gains access to what materials? Many libraries in India still retain closed-stack policies and such practices deserve to be further investigated within library scholarship.

Further study of the content of the collections may also provide insight into why the Baroda libraries failed. Nagar (1983) focuses primarily on the fact that many of the libraries had insufficient collections to maintain public interest due in part to budgetary issues. However, no attention within the library literature is paid to the social context in

which these collections first developed. How might the changing social and political contexts of the 1940s have affected the public's use of the libraries' collections?

Sayajirao was an Anglophile and many of his speeches and writings reflect his respect for the British Raj. In one of his later addresses he states, "To the British Government the Baroda State owes everything, and to that Government my State and I myself personally will always be truly grateful and loyal" (Nagar, 1983, p. 17). From Sayajirao's statements on libraries, it is known that he believed they were the environments in which citizens were shaped. Given Sayajirao's support of the British government and way of life, it would not be surprising to find that library collections would reflect a Western sensibility in terms of creating model subjects. But 1947 marked the end of the British Raj and the rise of the Indian national movement. How did nationalist ideologies change the definition of what it meant to be a citizen? Were the library collections made socially obsolete with this political shift? Can instances of libraries that did survive this change be found, and if so, what can be learned from their collections?

Conclusion

Shera (1949) argues that socioeconomic and sociocultural factors play critical roles in the advancement of libraries, and that the multifaceted nature of society at different moments in time, ultimately results in varied levels of support for and use of libraries. By analyzing the effects of cultural traditions and education on information seeking behavior, the waxing and waning of library development becomes clear, thus providing a better context from which to examine the modern public library movement in Baroda.

The lack of a written tradition in ancient India was the foremost factor in the non-existence of libraries. Understanding the importance placed on the transmission of knowledge through oral means during this time period, and the further examination of how this tradition affected the information seeking behaviors of individuals as well as the creation of information authority, is essential to determining the impact of writing in later periods. It is claimed that the conventions established particularly during the Vedic period have defined the shape of Indian society even in the modern era.

During the Mauryan period, new religious teachings emerged that challenged the inequalities of the caste-based society. It is within this new community that information access becomes more democratic amongst its practitioners. Several hundred years later Asoka's Rock Edicts would mark the beginning of the written tradition in India. Yet the development of writing and libraries within Buddhism was a reactionary measure, and evidence suggests that these collections were viewed as simply a way to preserve sacred knowledge rather than to transmit it. Primacy of oral teachings continued and access to collections was still mediated by the elite.

During the Islamic period, writing is introduced as an art in itself, and the written word is accorded prestige over that which was only orally transmitted. There is wide spread support of writing and the collection of books particularly among the elite. Educational systems imported from the Arab world emphasize the central position of the book in learning. Despite the extent of Muslim rule in India, Hindus and Muslims maintained separate existences and thus there is a continuation of older traditions alongside those of the new ruling order.

This separate existence also marks the society under colonial rule. Yet, unlike their Muslim predecessors, the British aggressively sought to enact social change through

socio-religious reform and the education system. Emphasis was placed on the written document, and colonial ideology directly challenged the authority of the spoken word. The prominence accorded to the written record, particularly in Oriental scholarship, placed the two traditions, which to this point had maintained a symbiotic relationship, in sharp opposition to one another. Although books became more accessible during this time period, their collection was still relegated to members of the elite and upper middle class. Public libraries established in the presidency towns of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras were founded mostly with active support and initiative of the Europeans, and their use was also restricted primarily to this population.

It is within this context that the Baroda public library system emerged. By using Shera's framework as a basis for examining the development of libraries in Baroda, the causes of the movement's failure can be understood as more than just elements of government neglect or financial insufficiencies. It becomes obvious that libraries, whether public or academic, are a product of social aims and attitudes towards information. In light of the social and cultural upheaval which occurred at the Partition of India, Shera's advice is poignant:

If future generations can learn anything from an examination of library history, it is that the objectives of the public library are directly dependent upon the objectives of society itself. The true frame of reference for the library is to be found in its coeval culture. No librarian can see clearly the ends which he should seek when his country is confused about the direction in which it is moving. When a people are certain of the goals toward which they strive, the functions of the public library can be precisely defined. (p. 248)

Only when library scholars in India begin to address the issue of the social aspects of libraries can true development occur.

Works Cited

- Allauddin, S. K., and Rout, R. K. (1996). *Libraries and librarianship during Muslim rule in India*. New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House.
- Asiatic Society (2007). History. Retrieved from <http://asiaticsocietycal.com/history/index.htm> on 7 January 2010.
- Barua, B. P. (1985) Rural Services in India. In George, K. M. (Ed.), *Indian Libraries: Trends and perspectives* (163-178). Hyderabad: Orient Longman.
- Basham, A. L. (1967). *The wonder that was India: A survey of the history and culture of the Indian sub-continent before the coming of the Muslims* (3rd ed.). New Delhi: Rupa & Co.
- Bopp, R., and Smith, L. (Eds.) (2001). *Reference and information services* (3rd ed.). Englewood, CO.: Libraries Unlimited.
- Bureau of Education (1965). *Selections from educational records: Calcutta, Superintendent Govt. Print, 1920-22* (Part I (1781-1839), Sharp, H (Ed.)). Delhi: National Archives of India.
- Calcutta University Commission. (1919) *Report*. Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing.
- Chakraborti, P. N. (1994). *Rise and growth of English East India Company: A study of British mercantile activities in Mughal India*. Calcutta: Punthi Pustak.
- Chakravarty, N.C. (1962) *Library movement in India: An introductory essay*. Delhi: Hindustan Publishing.

- Copland, I. (2006). Christianity as an arm of empire: The ambiguous case of India under the Company, c. 1813-1858. *The Historical Journal*, 49(4), p. 1025-1054.
- Datta, B.K. (1970) *Libraries and librarianship of ancient and medieval India*. Delhi, India: Atma Ram.
- Farmer, S., Sproat, R., and Witzel, M. (2004). The collapse of the Indus-script thesis: The myth of a literate Harappan civilization. *Electronic journal of Vedic studies*, 11(2), p. 19-57.
- Habib, I. (1992) Akbar and technology. *Social Scientist*, 20(9/10), p. 3-15.
- Hardiman, D. (2007). *Histories for the subordinated*. New York: Seagull.
- Harris, M. (1995). *History of libraries in the western world* (4th ed.). Metuchen, N. J. : Scarecrow Press.
- Kadi, W. and Mir, M. (2001) Literature and the Qur'an. In *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, (vol. 3, p. 205-227)
- Kloss, H., & McConnell, G. D. (1989). *The Written languages of the world : A survey of the degree and modes of use* (Vol. 2: Book1). Quebec : Presses de l'Université Laval.
- Konnur, M.B. (1990) *Transnational library relations: The Indo-American experience*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing.
- Kooiman, D. (2002). *Communalism and Indian princely states: Travancore, Baroda and Hyderabad in the 1930s*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Kumar, G. (1986). *Library development in India*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing.
- Mehrotra, S., Panchamukhi, P.R., Srivastava, R., & Srivastava, R. (2005) Universalizing elementary education in India: Uncaging the 'tiger' economy. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

- Nagar, M. L. (1969) *Public library movement in Baroda: 1901-1949* (Doctoral Dissertation). Columbia, Mo.: International Library Center.
- Nagar, M.L. (1983). *Foundation of Library Movement in India*. Ludhiana, India: Indian Library Institute and Bibliographical Centre.
- Nagar, M.L. (1990). *Contributions of Asa Don Dickinson (1876-1960): First American library pioneer in British India*. Columbia, MO: International Library Center.
- Pfeffer, J. and Sutton, R. (2006). *Hard facts, dangerous half-truths, and total nonsense*. Boston: Harvard Business School.
- Ranganathan, S.R. (1973). *New education and school library: Experience of half a century*. Bombay: Vikas Publishing.
- Rizvi, S.A.A. (1987). *The wonder that was India, 1200-1700*. New Delhi: Rupa & Co.
- Shera, J. (1949). *Foundations of the public library: The origins of the public library movement in New England 1629-1855*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sergeant, P. W. (1928) *The ruler of Baroda: An account of the life and work of the Maharaja Gaekwar*. London: John Murray.
- Shukla, S. (1983). *Public educational systems in a colonial context: Transition from indigenous to modern ideas and institutions in the nineteenth century*. Journal of Education, 165(4), p. 399-406.
- Smart, E. (1981) Akbar, illiterate genius. In Williams, J. G. (Ed.), *Kaladarsana: American studies in the art of India*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- Taher, M. (2001). *Libraries in India's national developmental perspective: A saga of fifty years since Independence*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing.
- Taher, M., & Davis, D.G. (1994). *Librarianship and library science in India: An outline of historical perspectives*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing.

Thapar, R. (1966). *A history of India*. London: Penguin.

Figures

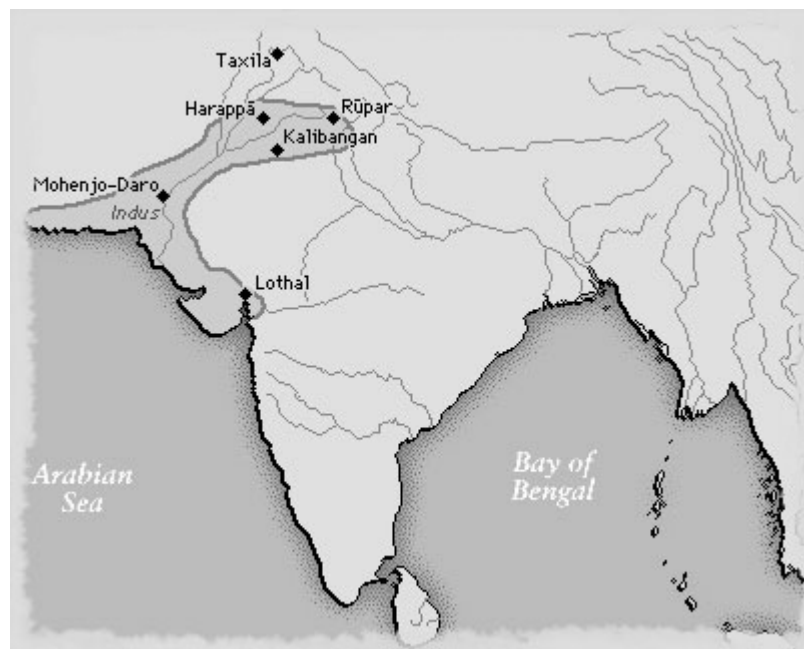


Figure 1: Area of the Harappan Culture



Figure 2: Indian states (political map)

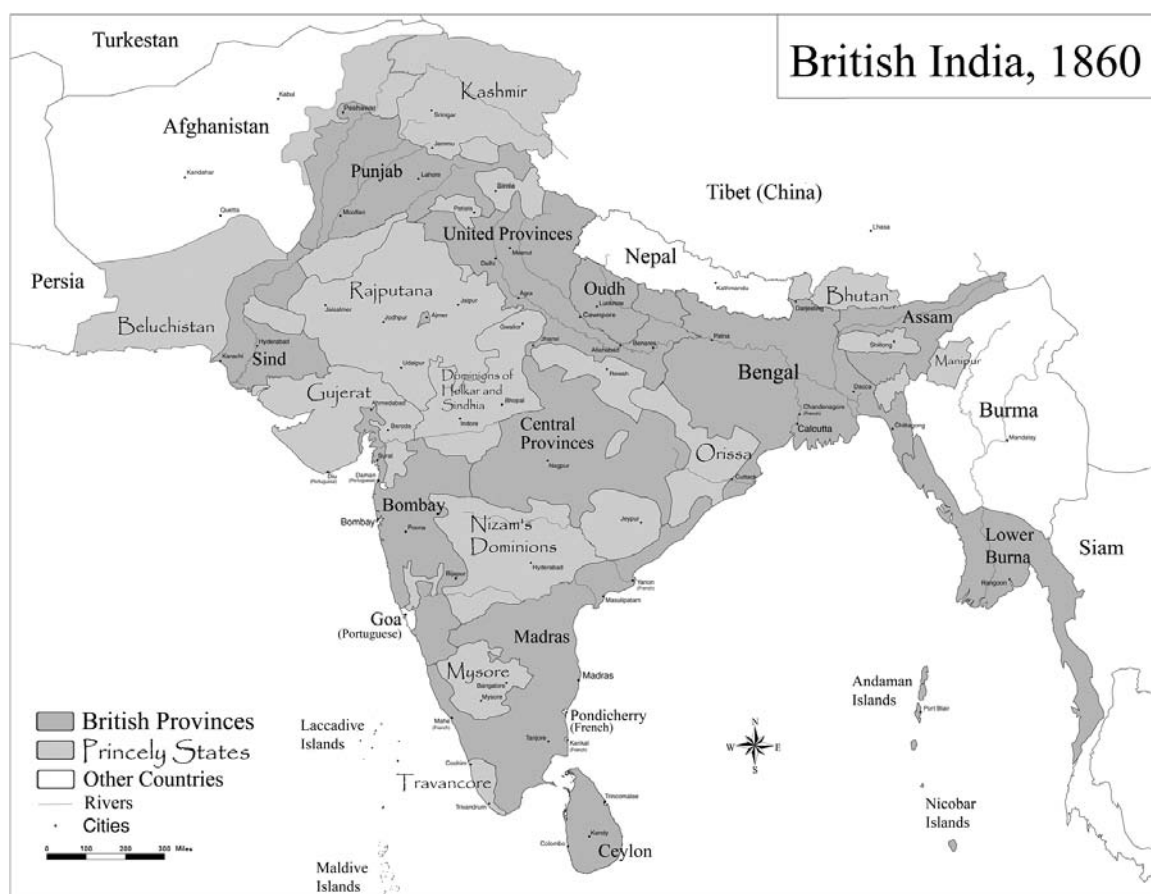


Figure 3: Areas under British Control in 1860

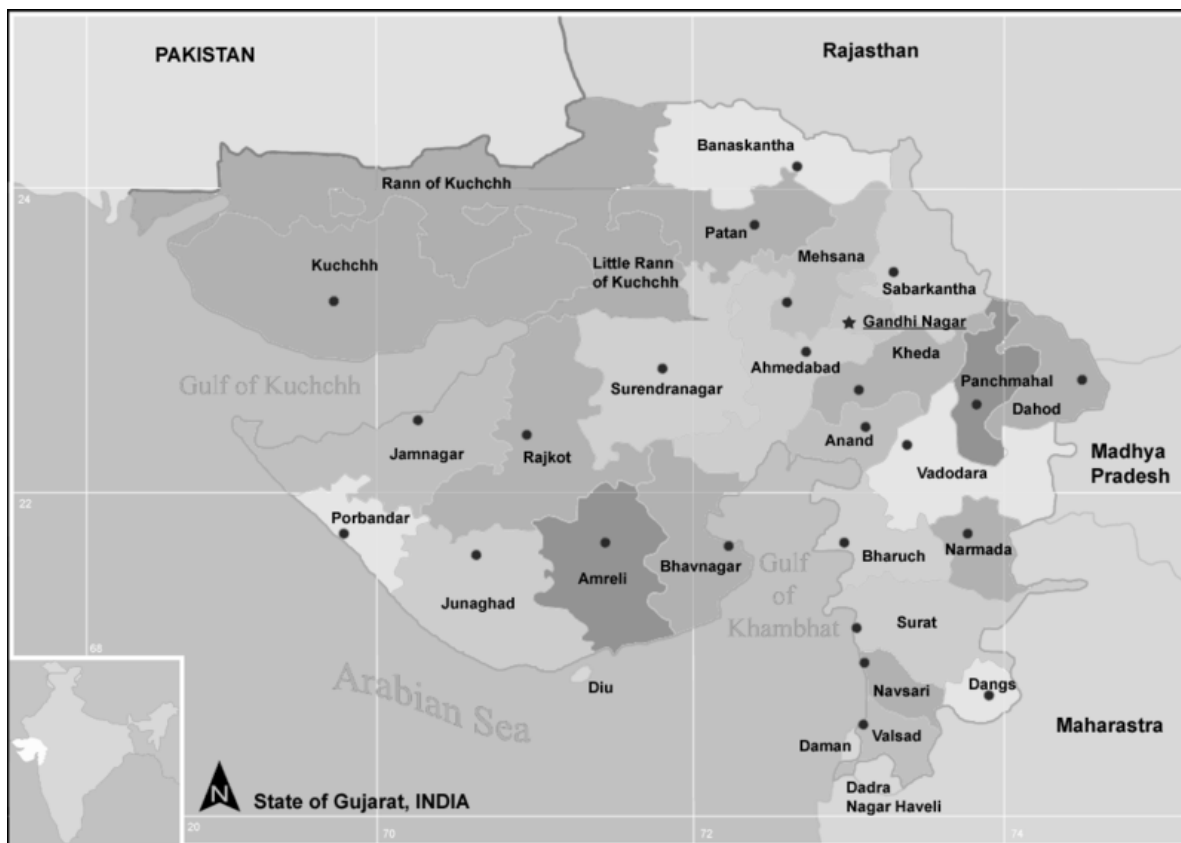


Figure 4: Districts of Gujarat (Baroda is the modern district of Vadodara)

Glossary of terms

Brahman—One of the four *varnas* of Hinduism; refers to the class of people wielding religious authority, most often clergy.

Dewan—A title, derived from Persian, for the chief revenue officer of a province; in India, following the establishment of Islamic rule, many Hindu governments also adopted this title for their revenue officers.

Dhamma—Social responsibility.

Karma—Sanskrit for “action, act, or performance.” It is understood as the main element of the cycle of cause and effect; every action has a karmic effect which will shape all experiences to come.

Ksatriya—One of the four *varnas* of Hinduism; refers to warrior and administrative classes.

Madrassa—Islamic school of higher learning.

Maharaja—The Indian term for a “high king” or great ruler; derived from the Sanskrit *mahant* meaning great, and *rajan* meaning king.

Maharani—The Indian term for ‘queen’.

Mahayana—Sanskrit for “Great Vehicle”; refers to one of the two major schools of Buddhism, the other being *Theravada*.

Maktab—Islamic primary school.

Mosque—Islamic place of worship.

Nirvana—Extinction, or the escape from the cycle of rebirth; a central concept within Buddhism.

Panchayat—Derived from the Sanskrit word for five (*panch*), this term is applied to a group of village elders who perform administrative functions within the community.

Purdah—A type of female seclusion.

Raja—The Indian term for a monarch, or princely ruler of the *Ksatriya varna*. SEE ALSO: Maharaja

Sudras—One of the four *varnas* of Hinduism; refers to the class of people representing servants or unfree peasants.

Sultan—In its simplest form, this Islamic term refers to a title of a Muslim ruler who claimed full sovereignty over a region without directly challenging or claiming the rule of the *Caliph*, or the head of the state; often compared with a governor.

Taluka—An administrative division usually consisting of several villages with a headquarters situated within a central or near-by city or town. The *taluka* exercises fiscal and administrative powers and maintains land records for the jurisdiction, also referred to as a *tehsil*.

Theravada—Sanskrit for “Ancient Teaching”; refers to the oldest school of Buddhism. The other major school is *Mahayana* Buddhism; of the two Theravada tends to be more conservative.

Tol—Hindu college or institution of higher learning.

Vaisyas—One of the four *varnas* of Hinduism; refers to merchants and farmers and other pastoral classes with economic prosperity.

Varna—Literally translates to “color” or “cover” in Sanskrit; refers to the basic unit of division within Hindu society. The four *varnas* of Hinduism are the *Brahmans*, *Ksatriyas*, *Vaisyas*, and the *Sudras*.

Vedas—A body of Sanskrit literature composed during the Vedic Period (1500-500 B.C.E.) in India, the most well-known being the *Rg Veda*.